





CURRENTS AND UNDERCURRENTS

OR,
LIFE AS WE SEE IT TO-DAY

BY
SARA ELIZABETH BROWNE

I go for all sharing the privileges of government who
assist in bearing its burdens, by no means excluding
woman.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THE
Abbey Press

PUBLISHERS

114

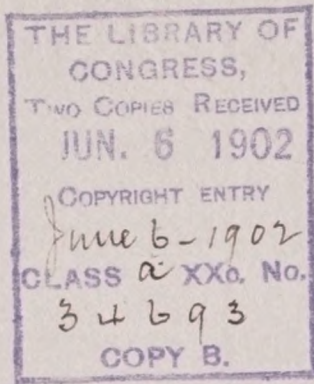
FIFTH AVENUE

London

NEW YORK

Montreal

02-16112



PZ3
.B8216

Copyright, 1902,
by
THE
Abbey Press



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Description.—Rena and Bounce.—Conversation.—Accident.—Herbert Langley.—Discussion.—Sam Trotter's Family.—Philosophy.—Religion.—Rena and Bounce Visit the Merwins.—Tom.....	11

CHAPTER II.

Invalid Recovering.—Farmers' Wives.—Change.—Invalid goes home.—Mental Unrest.—Tom leaves Home.—Calls upon Langley.—Reveries.....	30
--	----

CHAPTER III.

Margaret Stanley.—Why She is Ill.—Goes to New York.—Margaret at a Reception.—Meets Mr. Gordon.....	40
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

Margaret's Reverie.—Gordon Calls on Margaret.—Conversation.—Astrology.—Theosophy.....	52
---	----

CHAPTER V.

Langley and Tom.—Humanitarianism.—Corinne.—A Death Scene.—A Poor Man.—Why He Was Ignorant.	61
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

Beautiful Snow.—Winter Morning.—Breakfast.—Church.—Tom.—Rena's Thoughts and Dream.....	68
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE
Langley Calls Upon Tom.—They Discuss the Socialist Problem.—Difficulties.—Solution.....	75

CHAPTER VIII.

Margaret.—Mrs. Stanley's Conversation with Her Husband.—Disagreement.—Margaret and Gordon.....	87
--	----

CHAPTER IX.

Corinne's Reception.—What Is Love?—Corinne's Happiness.—Tom's Mistake.—Margaret at Home.....	103
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

Herbert Coming Home at Night.—Woman's Shrieks.—Ruffians.—Rescue.—Removed to Hospital.—Langley "Spotted."—Assault.—Arrest.—Hospital.....	113
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley's Conversation.—Thought Transference.—Hypnotism.—Woman.—Margaret.....	121
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

Growth of Bington.—Andrew.—Gordon Starts to See Margaret.—Repents.—Returns.—Mental Telepathy...	131
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Tom's Misery.—He Goes Home to Tell of His Coming Marriage.—Scenes.—Rena's Agony and Self-Control.—Tom's Marriage to Corinne.....	137
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

Andrew.—Mr. Burns and Family.—Growth of Bington.—Mental Telepathy.—Rena's Victory.....	153
--	-----

Contents.

5

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE

Gordon Goes to Bington.—Meets Uncle Eben.—Sees Margaret with Another Man.—Insane Jealousy.—Goes Home and Starts for Africa.—Uriel Brice.—His Mother..... 159

CHAPTER XVI.

Herbert Langley.—Recovered.—Brice in Pursuit of Margaret..... 170

CHAPTER XVII.

Amusements.—Festivities.—An Accident.—Margaret on Fire.—Rescued.—Her Trip to New York.—Brice Follows.—Margaret.—Goes South.—Returns to Bington. Episode on the River-bank.—Brice's Trick.—Margaret Again Rescued.—All Is Not Fair in Love and War.—Sick Child.—They Meet.—Brice Proposes.—Margaret Considers.—Accepts..... 175

CHAPTER XVIII.

Margaret Married.—Old Feelings Renewed.—Wedding Trip.—Home Again.—Uncle Eben.—A Year Passed.—Brice's Happiness..... 190

CHAPTER XIX.

Corinne Ill.—Death.—Confession.—Promises.—Tom Visits Rena.—Revelation.—Wedding Day Appointed..... 195

CHAPTER XX.

Brice's State of Mind.—A New Bookkeeper.—Failure.—Villainy.—Brice Gets Business.—Confidential with Bookkeeper.—Jealousy.—Plottings.—Arrest.—Counterplots.—Bribes.—Margaret Suspicious.—Change in Home Life.—Retrospection.—Bad News.—Forgot Law.—Adventure.—Sickness.—Death..... 205

CHAPTER XXI.

	PAGE
Rena and Tom Married.—Happiness.—Margaret at the Langleys'.—Andrew Married.—Margaret Settled in New York.—Gordon Returned.—Tells Margaret of His Love.—His Adventures.—A Drive.—Occultism...	216

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. Gordon Impatient.—Margaret Makes Difficulties.—Discussion of Ways and Means.—Wedding.—Travel.—Home.—Children.—Happiness and Harmony.....	228
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mrs. Benton and Flora. — Mrs. Benton Ill. — Herbert Comes.—Mrs. Benton Falls Asleep.—Murmurs Her Love.—Awakes in Convulsions.—Death.—Flora Goes to the Langleys'.—Herbert Proposes.—Family Blessing.—Tom and Rena in Their Home.—Herbert and Flora Married.—Tom and Rena Find the Cave with Little Corinne.....	237
---	-----

PREFACE.

THE principal purpose of the story set forth in the following pages is to indicate the hidden springs of emotion by which the human race is swayed, particularly in the realm of the affections where so much of joy and sorrow abides. Written in the leisure moments of a busy life, the narrative has grown out of the professional experience of Mental Healing, and has been gathered from the minds of those who have made me the recipient of personal confidences too sacred to be exposed, and yet too important to be lost to the world.

I have endeavored by a presentation of the theory of thought transference, hypnotic suggestion and the continual influence of mind over mind, to explain the trite saying, "The course of true love never runs smooth," and to indicate the path of safety and ultimate happiness to those distracted souls who are torn by conflicting emotions and tormented by the ebb and flow of depressing thoughts which are reflections from other minds, and are not their own. The name of these sufferers are legion; the tears they shed and the groans they utter in secret, nursing their woe as something they feel but do not understand, call for aid; to their call I have in these pages endeavored to respond, pointing out cause and consequence, and trying to throw such light upon the darkness as shall make it less diffi-

cult for those who tread the paths of sorrow and less perilous for those who wield a power they do not understand.

I have spared no pains to substantiate my own knowledge and experience by others in Medical, as well as Mental lines, and am sure if people would study psychic law, it would greatly enhance human happiness. Hitherto, the Scientists, even those members of societies for the investigation of phenomena in this line, have not turned to the "inner light" but have used such methods as they would to test a piece of machinery. They have tried to get material tests of a spiritual condition. The most I could do in this work is to give hints and suggestions for the reader to work out.

Hypnotism, as I understand it, is a dominance of one mind over another, either consciously or unconsciously, through suggestion, which means a desire in one mind, either conscious or unconscious, that overpowers desire in the other mind by force of will only. Mental Scientists use suggestion through the power of Reason, sometimes but not necessarily, enforced by will; the patient in this case being educated before he is healed, and who succumbs to the other mind because he sees the reason why, and not because he must.

As to the question of Woman's status in society, any one who has read John Stuart Mill's "Subjection of Woman" will not need the little I have shown here, and will not think me partial on the side of woman.

This story has a purpose, else it would not have been written; no other especial merit is claimed for it. It

is the story of lives that have been, are, and will be lived, with varying detail, by thousands and tens of thousands in this broad land of ours; a story of everyday people, told in common phrase. My ambition is satisfied if the book helps even in small degree to bring about a healthier and happier equilibrium between the sexes. If it fail to do this, the fault is in the method of sowing the seed, and not in the nature of the seed that is sown, for there is abiding truth in these thoughts I give to the world. This Truth is mighty and will prevail.

THE AUTHOR.

CURRENTS AND UNDERCURRENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Description.—Rena and Bounce.—Conversation.—Accident.
—Herbert Langley.—Discussion.—Sam Trotter's Family.
—Philosopsy.—Religion.—Rena and Bounce Visit the
Merwins.—Tom.

IN a remote country town in the wilds of New Hampshire, there nestled a quiet pastoral valley where the verdure was of deepest emerald hue, the fields wavy with grain and the silken grasses that must ere long yield their beauty and luxuriance to the cruel scythe of the stalwart mower. The sky had cleared but the trees were yet dripping from a recent shower. Here sat a cosy farmhouse: its white sides glistened in the sun, and its sloping roof ran down almost within reach of a tall man's hand. A house sheltered under the shade of a lofty mountain which towered in all its grandeur toward high heaven, giving majestic beauty to the gloriously blue sky and floating, fleecy clouds.

A trim piazza ran across the front of the house, and the fragrant honeysuckle and the broad cool leaves of a grape vine loaded with fruit, made a delightfully shady and comfortable retreat from the bright afternoon sun.

A hen with her brood of tiny chicks, scratched and clucked, and struggled with her motherly fears lest her downy brood should go unfed. The turkey gobbler strutted in his masculine pride; and, perched upon the well-sweep sat a pair of cooing doves talking over their family affairs with busy eagerness; while that placid evidence of perpetual motion, a cow, stood calmly chewing her cud in the shade of an apple tree; the sleek colt browsing patiently in the hot sun the while.

Inside the house all was quiet; the good mother sat by the window mending her husband's socks, with the family cat purring contentedly at her feet and the busy flies buzzing about her patient and gentle face. The father and his bronzed and manly son were in the fields hoeing, and the eldest daughter sat with her work, under the vines of the shady piazza, as quiet, and yet as busy as all nature around her.

Presently there came an elfin shout, and a curly head with a hat on the back of its neck, peered around the corner of the house, betokening the appearance of the pet of the family; and the wagging of an equally curly tail at her side, betrayed the faithful but frisky family pet, Bounce, who aided and abetted his young mistress in all her frolics and escapades.

He was a roly-poly fellow with a curly white body and tail, with here and there a brown spot, and the softest brown head and silkiest ears one often sees; while his human-looking eyes sparkled with fun or gazed with fond faithfulness at his merry, young mistress.

But as she removes her hat and steps upon the piazza, let us try to describe her. She was short and

slight with firm muscles, plump and rounded figure, free and easy carriage, hardy and strong, but with a delicate grace and refinement born of the sky, the mountains and the tender beauty of nature in which she had grown; she was the incarnation of life and health. The golden hair that was brushed back from her face in moist rings and waves, the sparkling eyes, patterns of the ethereal blue of summer skies, the soft cheek that was too transparent to be tanned by the fiercest rays old Sol could cast at her, the cunning dimples that dented her cheeks and chin, the pearly teeth and red-ripe lips, made a picture deliciously fascinating.

"Well my child," said the good mother, "what have you and Bounce been up to now? I should think you would be melted in this hot sun, and I really believe you have been running, too, and in such weather! Do sit down and get cool. Why don't you stay in the house when it is so hot?"

"Oh mother mine, you know I never mind the heat, Bounce and I like it; he thought he was going to get here first and I had to run for it to beat him, didn't I Bounce?" And she stroked his silken ears fondly. "But really, it isn't so very warm, and we wanted to find the cave Uncle Tobias told about when he was here last; I really could not wait any longer, I wanted to see it so much. To think I have lived here seventeen years and did not know there was a cave with a romance attached to it. Bounce and I hunted and hunted but we could not find it, and I am afraid we shall have to wait till Uncle Tobias comes again before

we can explore it. I found the tree he described—or I thought I did,—but after that I walked ten paces in every direction and could see nothing but ordinary rocks and things, not a shadow of an entrance anywhere; I could not roll away any of the big stones to look behind them, so at last I gave it up; but I'm going to see it yet, and the dismal cave where those lovers were shut in and—oh, all of the rest of it. Do tell it to me again, mother dear, I have partly forgotten; anyway, I want to hear the thrilling part. Do you remember it too? Why didn't you tell me about it, it is too bad."

"Why child, I had forgotten all about it, and then, if I hadn't, you would have been sure to climb the mountain from bottom to top until you found it, and I don't like to have you off alone so much. Who knows what you will meet on the mountain; there are snakes there, and you might fall and get hurt and no one would know where to find you."

"Oh pshaw! Mamma, Bounce would kill the snakes, and if anything happened to me he would come and tell you and take you back to me. I'm not the least bit afraid and I *must* find the cave. I should like it if I had a man to go with me, but Andrew and father are always busy, and so is every one else about here but me; what a renegade I am mother! Well, never mind dear, I'll sow my wild cats some day, I suppose, and sit down to my mending as calmly as Margaret does now, but it seems a long way off."

"Margaret, did you use to romp about as I do? I never remember you any way but calm and quiet. I

should just fly into pieces to be so; I wonder if I ever will be?"

"I don't know, Rena," said her sister, "you know when I was your age there were all the other children to look after and the work to do, and I was the oldest and mother not strong; I had to help her and there was no time for romping, but, by the time you came, the others were grown and most of them away; you were the baby and had nothing to hinder you from growing up your own way. You know father was not well off then as he is now, and we all had to work to help pay for the farm and make a home for him and mother. We have been prospered, haven't we mother? The place is free from debt, thank God, and you are likely to spend your last days in comfort if your earlier ones were hard. But who is that? There seems to be something the matter. Why, the horse has fallen!"

In a twinkling, Bounce and his mistress were off down the road where a horse had fallen, and lay with his rider prostrate in the dust. Before she had reached them, the horse had struggled to his feet and stood gazing at his master, who was less fortunate, for the horse had fallen upon him and crushed his foot, and he had fainted and lay with his face upturned to the sun and his dark locks mingled with the dust of the road.

In a moment the girl knelt beside him, lifting his head in her lap; with her handkerchief she carefully brushed the dust from his face and hair marveling to see how handsome and strong he was, and yet so helpless.

Margaret had run for her father and brother, who,

lifting the unconscious man carefully, bore him to the house, while Rena led the noble but unfortunate horse as he limped painfully to the stables, and left him in care of the hired man who had just come from the lot. By some rare good fortune, the village doctor was driving by and was called in. He skillfully dressed the wounded foot, helped to get the patient to bed in the old fashioned but cosy spare room, watched his return to consciousness, and then left him with a cooling draught, directions for quiet, and a promise to call next day.

Days and weeks passed, and still that obstinate foot refused to get well; whether because of the pleasant surroundings and agreeable nurse, or because it had been badly crushed and must have time to heal, history does not say.

To say the patient was impatient, was rather more than strictly true; for after the first sharp disappointment when he found he could not keep the business engagement he had started upon, he succumbed to the inevitable with good grace, and, saving the regret he felt at giving so much trouble to his kind entertainers, he bore his pain and seclusion with remarkable equanimity. Naturally it fell to the lot of Rena to wait upon and entertain him, as household cares kept Margaret and Mrs. Stanley busy.

Herbert Langley was a man of twenty-five years, of good birth and education. His father was a large mill owner in a neighboring town, and all that money, intelligent and sensible ideas could do, had been done to fit Herbert, his only son, for a useful and success-

ful life. His college course was passed with high honors, for he was a worker and conscientious. He entered with zest into his father's business affairs and was most active and efficient, as well as humane and charitable to the employees. This was the first rest he had taken since he had graduated, for his vigorous health did not require it, and his interests and pleasure were there. Under the care of the good physician he was soon relieved of his pain, and the time passed in waiting for the tardy healing was anything but irksome.

To Rena this was a new experience. An adventure had really come. She had lived under the shadow of the everlasting hills, seeing few people, and caring for none of the men she had met. In fact, Bounce was her dearest male friend, and she had no especial thought or care for any other.

To be in constant attendance on a man of such culture and refinement and of such noble and gentle qualities, was an awakener to her slumbering mind.

Her education had been limited as far as schools go. She had studied the sky, the mountains, animal life and nature in every form, but few books; she had read to be sure, and her divine instinct had chosen for her only pure and ennobling books. She had been taught the rudiments of education at the village school, and with the example of her mother, who was the daughter of a clergyman in a country town, and one of God's nobility, she had grown like the daisies, towards God; with their pure white faces and golden hearts.

Five weeks had elapsed: Mr. Langley had been

drawn out on the piazza in a big chair and was reading to the ladies, who had gathered around him with their sewing, for the afternoon rest. Rena in a simple white dress with a bit of lace and a blue ribbon at its open throat, sat on a low footstool arranging a bunch of bright-eyed daisies and occasionally patting the head of Bounce, who lay at her side lolling out his tongue and panting with the heat.

He was reading Tennyson's "Princess" and they fell into a discussion of the theme of woman's place in life; and the now common socialistic theories of the day, which to these quiet women, shut in from the stir and business of life, was a new and absorbing subject.

"Why, to be sure," said Mrs. Stanley, "some women's lives do seem to be hard, with not even the butter and egg money to call their own; and with all the work and no pay except the clothes they wear and what they eat, it is a slave's life from year to year.

"There's Sam Trotters, he is so economical, he sells all the butter and eggs, because he says he can't afford to feed his wife and young-ones on such living; bread and milk, and pork and potatoes are good enough for them. Why, I don't suppose his children ever saw cake in their house; but Sam says, 'men who work hard must have meat and substantial things to eat,' and then it looks kinder mean for a man not to feed his help well, and neighbors will talk about it. A man must keep up a good name or he can't git help, and the crops must be harvested, and *he* can't do it alone of course. So he keeps two men to help, 'cause he ain't very

strong; his back is lame, too, and he can only do some of the light work. But his wife, who isn't bigger'n a minute, and only weighs ninety pounds, has to cook separate meals for three men, and of the best too, and then fry pork and johnny-cakes for herself and the children, and there's five of them.

"Then she does all the other work and takes care of the milk of five cows, and makes butter for the men folks, and then, dear me, what a time she has to get clothes for herself and the children; it is too bad! She needs *her* rights sure enough.

"But now with me, I have all the rights I want, just as much as Eben has of everything; and I say that of him, he never refused me anything I asked him and I never asked him for anything I did not know he could afford to give me. But sure enough, I'm an exception when you come to think of it, after looking around among the neighbors."

"Yes, indeed, Mrs. Stanley, you certainly are an exception," said Mr. Langley, "and Miss Rena here knows very little of the hardships some of our young women in the factory suffer, from brutal fathers, husbands and brothers even. It seems discouraging sometimes to try to help them, but the world looks all awry now-a-days; nature, or the natural mind, seems in convulsion; and, like the child's house built of blocks, the foundations seem to have slipped out of place through not having been firmly grounded, and the whole structure on the point of toppling over; indeed, the roof has already fallen off in some places and it is easy to look down to the bottom and see how insecure the

foundations are. In fact our system of society is all wrong; even the old idea of Deity is assailed, and God is no longer a person sitting in judgment and rewarding or punishing his children, as he is pleased or angry with their conduct, and it is not so strange that we should reject this idea of God, when we consider that we did not ask to be put here at all and really did not desire to be, but are compelled to go through with this life whether we will or not."

"Why, sure enough!" said Rena, "we didn't, did we? I never thought of that before, but it explains some things that have puzzled me. Do go on Mr. Langley, I want to hear more."

"Let us illustrate individual life by a leaf blown by a strong wind into a stream of water. If the leaf could know and express itself it would probably prefer the tree; it belongs there, and was supported and strengthened by the tree's juices. There is its home; but, along comes a fierce gale of wind, the leaf is rudely separated from its source and strikes upon the merciless water which carries it along in spite of itself; for a while it has smooth sailing, the sun is bright, the banks of the stream are pleasant, and it rather enjoys itself, and thinks it does not miss its mother so very much; but by and by the stream grows rough, stones and rocks impede its way; the leaf is dashed here and there, beaten and crushed in this whirlpool and torn in another, until it is thrown breathless and gasping on the shore or into smooth water again. Was the leaf to blame? Could it stop at any time in its mad career? Or was the gust of wind to blame, or the tree, because

Father, and I know he will help me if I try my best, and before I know it, that washing is done, and I know I could not have done it if I had not asked Him."

"You are quite right, you could not; but let us think of it. If there is a God, He must know everything. He must be able to see your needs when you ask Him, and the kind of help you want, or He might help you to a tiresome piece of sewing when you wanted to wash. So He must see *just* what you need. Now when you consider the number of inhabitants there are on the earth, to say nothing of those on other planets, it would seem to be more than we could expect of any *personality*. To be able to look from any heaven, no matter how high or how beautiful, to all the people who call upon Him, to say nothing of the animals, the flowers and all mineral life. Yes, Life! Everything that lives needs God at all times,—all the gases and ethers,—for everything that holds together must necessarily have life. You know also, the God of to-day would have much more to do than the God of Bible times, and even that time would have kept him pretty busy."

"But He is all-powerful as well as all-knowing," said Margaret. "He is *God*, and not man. Oh, of course, a man could not do it. You speak of God as if he were man."

"No, I do not mean to be so understood. I speak of a *personality* and that implies limitations, whether in God or man. I do not think God is a personality, but a Principle,—Life. It can pervade all things, be everywhere at one and the same time; be all power, all in-

it could absorb, and the time for the wind to blow strong, and the law of necessity that governs all nature, made it necessary to land the leaf on the water just as it did; it was not Sin and Punishment, but simply Cause and Effect; the leaf had to pass through that trial. It was of no more use as a leaf, but had to fulfill the law of its existence. Man's life on earth begins with being a little child, with no knowledge of life or its uses; in order to learn, it must be put from its mother's arms on the floor; then its desire for action, to go somewhere, prompts it to crawl about; by and by it pulls itself up, and after a little time can walk, and so on through life; only by effort, action, can we attain to knowledge; knowledge is the object of life, the end and aim of all existence; and remember, it cannot be attained without the straining and groaning that *compels* evolution."

The surprise with which these words were received may well be imagined when we remember the religious belief to which these rural people had been educated, for though the words were very simple, and adapted to their understanding, the ideas were so new and strange, it would change the whole current of their being to accept them.

"Why!" said Mrs. Stanley, "you cannot mean there is no God, no Father, in whom we can trust, who takes care of us as he does the sparrows? I cannot believe that. I never could get along from day to day if I hadn't that to rest upon. I am frightened to think of it even. Why, if I have a big washing to do and it seems as if I couldn't get through it, I ask my Heavenly

it did not hold firmer to its child? No indeed! Was anyone punishing this leaf for sailing down the stream of life in such a helpless way?"

"Why, of course not," said Miss Rena. "How could anyone think so? The leaf was not punished for what it could not help. Why it just couldn't help it and that's all there is about it."

"Then why did it get broken and crushed?" asked Mr. Langley.

"Why, because it hit the rocks to be sure, but, no, that wasn't all; how funny; there must be some reason,—but Bounce and I have not thought it out; we'll have to take a stroll to-morrow, old boy, and study it over on the mountain. That's my divinity school, Mr. Langley, but why is it? I want to know what you think."

"Why don't you see, child," said Mrs. Stanley, "the leaf had a free will but did not exercise it; it did not need to go in such rough places if it had looked up to God and steered itself right."

"Why yes, mother," said Margaret, "but then you know God foreordained the leaf to go as it did."

"But Margaret you must not question God's ways; they are mysterious and past finding out."

"Do you not think, Mrs. Stanley," said Langley, "if by looking at it a little we can come to a solution that is reasonable, we need not feel it is wrong to look? And I think there is a rational explanation."

"We have only to remember that the tree, the leaf, and the stream were all governed by law, Divine law, which is inexorable. The time for the tree to part with the leaf had come; it had taken all the nourishment

telligence, all force, all love, all truth, an ever present entity, inexhaustible, unchangeable; a never failing source from whence we can draw for *all* our needs. It always was, always will be. When you ask God to help you to do a piece of work that seems difficult to you, you simply *put yourself in a position to take what is, and always has been right at your hand*, only you did not see it because of your blindness and fear, like the child to whom you hold up a bright apple that he wants; he only has to reach out for it, put up his hands and take it; but if he is too young and ignorant to know he can do this, he fails to get what he wants.

“When you pray, you only reach out with your thought, and whatever you strongly desire is yours; but you cannot have it until you feel your need most desperately.”

“And so you think there is no ‘Father in Heaven’ upon whom we can call if we are in trouble,” said Margaret. “No, I do not think there is a personal Father that we can ask. If there was, he could not change any of his laws to please any one. If there were any such laws, that you should be tired doing your washing, he could not change it even for Himself; if he could, they would not *be* laws. Law is unchangeable. As I see it, no change is necessary. The only reason you do not have everything you want, is because you do not reach out for it. You do not *know* you can have it, therefore do not reach for it with strong enough desire. You want it without effort, you wish to get it *easy*.”

“I can send my thoughts any and every where,

but not at the same moment; when I think of you, I cannot think of anything else. My thought must touch some portion of your mind, and at the *instant of touch*, it can be nowhere else. But God must be everywhere and at the same instant to answer all the demands made upon him, so it seems to me, He must be something *more* than a personality no matter how great or powerful."

"Oh bother! my head is like a whirlpool with your talk. Who *knows* anyway?" said restless Rena. "Come Bounce, let's have a run," and off they went and were soon out of sight. This broke up the conversation, and Mrs. Stanley and Margaret went to get supper, and left Mr. Langley to philosophize to himself.

There was a long stretch of lawn in front of the house before the road was reached, and on the opposite side of that was a smooth green meadow, and beyond, a view of the river which was so bordered with trees and undergrowth that only a small open space was visible from the piazza; but farther down the bank of the stream was a house, another farm, and thither Rena and Bounce, after their frolic, wended their way.

The sun was getting low and lighted up the hills in the distance beyond the river. All nature was in that hush that comes in the gloaming just before the God of light loses Himself in the unseen. Lower and lower it sank and the glow deepened and flamed up, lighting all the sky as if with the radiance of its love for the quiet scene it was loath to leave, if only for a night.

Subdued and sobered by its grandeur and beauty, Rena with her eyes fixed on the radiant effulgence of

light, sauntered along, thinking in spite of herself of the conversation she had heard. God, she thought, what *is* God and Life what is *It*? What makes the beautiful light in the sky? God I suppose; but, oh, how ignorant I am!

In the midst of her reverie she came in sight of the house and of a stalwart young man with a brimming pail of milk in either hand, whistling merrily as he hurried along.

"Hello Rena! glad to see you. Come in and find the girls. You are just in time for supper, too, and if you'll stay, we will have a row on the river. There will be a full moon. Ah! here's Hattie."

"You're a god-send, Rena. Supper is ready and we will have such a nice time. We wanted to go all the afternoon but Tom wouldn't say yes. Now he'll be sure to, for he'll do anything for you."

"I am sorry I cannot stay, Hattie," said Rena, "but I just ran away from their seriousness at home, and must get back to our invalid to take him into the house, as mother and Madge will be busy. They were talking about God, and things, till my head spun like a top trying to think what they meant. I'm such a ninny anyway. It makes me blue to think how little I know and am worth in the world."

"Why, Rena! we think you know everything. Tom does anyway; do come to supper." Just then Tom made his appearance and added his entreaties to his sister's.

Tom and Rena had always been playmates and had been like brother and sister, but he was getting out of

the way of teasing her as he used to, calling her curly-pate, and Miss Romp, and on every occasion catching her up and perching her on some place too high for her to get down without begging him to lift her.

Rena seemed a bit shy of him, too, once in a while, and the old feeling of freedom was gradually being replaced by the natural reserve of the young woman.

She firmly resisted all their entreaties, and declared she must go. Her mother would expect her to attend to the invalid. Tom's face clouded a little, but he said, "Well, if you must go, I'll walk over with you. I've never seen your famous invalid, but now that he is able to be out, I would like to call upon him."

"I am sure he would be glad to see you, but this is the first day he has been out on the piazza and I think he will hardly feel able to see you to-night, and besides you know it is not dark, and anyway, I have Bounce for company, and you have not refreshed the inner man; your supper waits, Sir. I dare not walk with a hungry man. I have heard they're liable to be cross, so I'll run away by myself now, and in a day or two you and the girls come over and see Mr. Langley."

"Thank you," said Hattie, "we will be glad to; we should like to see him."

"Well, good-bye then." And with a merry laugh and wave of the hand, Rena walked rapidly away.

For the first time, she was not quite willing Tom should walk home with her, but she could not tell why. It had always been his habit, and she had been glad enough to have him, but Tom was in his working clothes (as he often had been before, and she had not

thought anything about it), but she had not been awakened to a sense of what clothes mean to us. Mr. Langley's personal appearance had attracted her thought in that direction. She had seen only farming people who dressed according to their work, and Sundays got themselves into a "dress-up suit" that made them feel awkward and constrained, and caused them to hail with delight the time to lay them aside and feel at ease once more. Mr. Langley's sense of comfort and at homeness when well dressed had impressed her, and she was too fond of Tom to be willing he should appear at a disadvantage; besides her own pride rose up and made her ashamed, not of Tom, but of his clothes. She was by no means so weak and shallow a girl as to think the clothes made the man, but she realized now that they go far towards making a good impression, and while she said to herself boldly, that it made no difference what Mr. Langley thought, he was nothing to her but their guest, yet she shrank from his judgment and had much rather her friends would come together in their best attire and make a formal call.

Tom was disgruntled. He did not enjoy his supper and the girls thought he was "crosser after supper than he was before," and did not hesitate to tell him so in the most sisterly fashion.

He had been in the habit of thinking Rena belonged to him, in a sisterly way, of course, and she had always been glad enough to have him walk over with her before, and had not been so very thoughtful about his supper either. Many a time he had gone over when

he was more hungry and tired than he was now, and he felt in some dim and undefined way the real reason she did not wish him to go.

He was chagrined, and manlike, cross, and threw himself under a tree in a fit of sulks and no persuasion would tempt him to the promised row on the river. He said he was tired and did not feel like rowing and they finally left him alone in disgust.

Rena hastened home and found her patient all by himself, and lost in reverie.

“Well, Miss Rena, have you gathered your scattered wits together and come back sane? I am sorry we drifted into such deep subjects; it came about of itself somehow. I did not intend to make a preacher of myself. One never knows how such conversations do come about.”

“Oh, I enjoyed what you said very much and am sure it must be true, for it somehow agrees with what I have always felt but never heard expressed. You see, I get my thoughts from the hills, and the sky, and out of Bounce’s eyes. Do you know I learn more from him sometimes than from human companionship? When you understand dogs they can tell you so much. I had rather look for God in his eyes than in the Bible or any other book, but I never dared say so before. They think me quite a heretic anyway. But I think dogs know you better than people; they read your thoughts some way; in fact, I think the language of animals is thought language. They cannot understand words, you know, but they *feel* what you mean.”

CHAPTER II.

Invalid Recovering.—Farmers' Wives.—Change.—Invalid goes home.—Mental Unrest.—Tom leaves Home.—Calls upon Langley.—Reveries.

TIME passed quickly and ere long Mr. Langley was able to walk, and although he lingered on one pretext or another, there finally came a time when he could no longer delay his departure. With deepest regret he packed his belongings and took his leave.

From the women who had become so accustomed to "having him around" he took away with himself all their sunshine and pleasure. They had not now the diversion of his intelligent and interesting conversation, his chatty ways, his numerous jokes, and the general magnetism of his presence, and they missed his interest in the little household affairs, the helping hand he was always so eager to lend, and the endless ways he had of easing their cares and burdens in so unobtrusive a way they did not know until he was gone what he had really been to them.

To Margaret and Rena, he had opened a new world of thought and ideas. Life meant something different to them than it did that day when he was brought to their door unconscious; but the pain of parting was more acute for all that had come to them through him; and as winter, which is always more or less desolate

in the country, set in, the prospect seemed to them dreary indeed; for there were few neighbors, and those few were now uncongenial after the broader outlook and the glimpse of more refined life they had caught. The everlasting talk of pigs, chickens, crops, horses, cows, and the endless neighborhood gossip, was extremely distasteful to them. Rena's former admirers seemed boorish to her and were really unendurable. Poor Tom was in despair. For while she was too true a woman to discard her old friendships, aside from his having such sterling qualities and being the playmate of her childhood, she could not overlook his sunburned face, hard hands, and the dress suitable to him in his surroundings, and though she knew his sturdy heart was true and his character noble, the outward appearance could not be forgotten.

Tom was a reader and thinker too, and in his unsophisticated way he saw through things pretty clearly, and dimly comprehended Rena's state of mind. In some of her moods—for he saw she was very moody—she was so like her old self his heart throbbed wildly and his hopes ran high, only to be dashed to pieces at their next meeting. But he did not blame, because he understood her.

He and his sisters had called upon Mr. Langley before his departure and liked his pleasant, manly ways, and in his heart of hearts he did not blame Rena for admiring him; but a deep-seated, yet not unworthy, jealousy had taken possession of him and although his nature was too generous and honorable to cherish revengeful or vindictive thoughts, he wished Langley had been a

thousand miles away before he came to interfere with his love and his life plans, for he had made plans that were now shattered, and he saw that his hopes of a quiet farm life must give way to a more active one amid busier scenes, or he must lose his inspiration, the pet and plaything of his boyhood, and the hopes of his manhood, his beloved Rena. This was not to be thought of for a moment. He would at least make a brave fight for her, whether he liked it or not. The bitterness and loneliness of not seeing her, the thought that he would be out of sight and so out of mind and the sooner forgotten, was pain indeed. But a resolution once formed was never broken with him, and after finding a man to take his place on the farm, and overcoming the objections of his father and family, he went out into the world to seek his fortune.

Meantime our hero of the accident had gone home and entered into business with renewed zest. His long rest and recuperation made him feel no end of vigor and fullness of life, and he well understood that a large part of this he owed to his kind little nurse and the two other devoted women of the household, and to the congenial surroundings and quiet restfulness of the place, and his gratitude knew no bounds. He had also learned much of the habits and manners of a class of people with whom he had never before come in contact—the farmers.

He had found they were patient, plodding, kind, generous, and considerate of others; some of them deep thinkers, and in their own quaint way they reasoned out things, in sometimes very original lines. But the

majority of them were so much occupied with their daily work they were content to let the minister do their thinking for them, while they tried to live up to his ideas as well as they could without much trouble.

It is not often that farmers as a class go very far wrong. They live in too close proximity to nature. The sun, the sky, the trees, the brown earth, animal and insect life, the birds and flowers, are all too close patterns of man's highest conception (which is God) to leave much room for ungenerous or base conduct. And yet how thoughtless and stolid is man, to say nothing of his selfishness. The man with the kindest heart is often led into most heedless and unkind acts from mere blind persistence in the old ways of doing things. Many a tired farmer's wife can testify to this. The horses and cattle must have rest, men too must stop work at sundown, but the farmer's wife must begin with the break of day, often keeping on her feet till the last dish is washed at night, and then sew or mend all the evening to keep the children's clothes in order while the husband smokes his pipe in comfort, and gossips with a neighbor. And finally when she is at last in bed she must sleep "with one eye open" to tend a restless child, while her husband snores comfortably beside her. Only God knows the trials of some farmers' wives. With little or no chance for culture or for reading even the daily papers, no amusement, no recreation, with a thoughtless and many times brutal husband, who actually *never thinks of her*, if she does her work and feeds him and the children. Ah me! when we want to find martyrs, let us look for them among farmers'.

wives. It is an actual fact that a common farmer whose wife was with child asked her to walk up a hill in order that the mare with foal might have less to draw. A wife who has more than half the work should have half the common earnings.

What would the farmer's consternation be if she should present her bill like other employees for her duties as cook, laundress, housekeeper, and nurse, with even no extra charge for childbearing and dying off in consequence?

Thoughts something like these were running through Herbert Langley's mind one evening as he sat at home in the early fall, with a cheerful fire in the grate, a shaded lamp on the table, the evening paper and an interesting book awaiting his mood of perusal. He had donned dressing-gown and slippers, drawn the window shades and settled himself for a pleasant evening alone, when a peal from the doorbell startled him from his reverie, and soon the servant ushered in a young man who greeted him with some embarrassment and whom he did not at first recognize. The stranger was no other than our friend Tom, who, on the strength of the slight acquaintance he had with Mr. Langley at Mr. Stanley's, had called for a word of advice as to the best way to further his plans for the future; for Tom had no ill will for the man he thought had supplanted him; on the contrary he really liked him.

Our friend was a study, and while Mr. Langley grasps his hand warmly and bustles about to seat him comfortably, let us describe him. He was tall, muscular, straight as an Indian, with light blue eyes, an

aquiline nose rather wide at the nostrils, mobile lips shaded by a light mustache through which shone his strong, white, even teeth, and where an ever ready smile always hovered, a broad fair forehead which the friendly hat had shielded from the too wanton rays of the sun that had bronzed his face and hands, making him seem older than his twenty-two years of life would warrant,—a man whom you would trust from the first glance you had of him and with whom a longer acquaintance would bear you out in all the confidence you could give him, and upon whom you could stake your honor with impunity. His character was as yet unformed, but a firm resolve and earnest purpose shone through every line of his face, and every curve of his manly figure.

The shade of disappointment that had crossed Langley's face at the unwelcome interruption cleared instantly as he saw who his visitor was, for of all things in the world he would most like to hear from the kind friends for whom he had so high a regard, and whom he knew Tom must have seen recently. The necessary hospitalities disposed of, his first inquiry was for the Stanleys.

"Well," said Tom, "I was there last night and found them all quite well but hardly happy. Do you know, Mr. Langley, I think you unsettled the women-folk a good deal and they miss you very much; your ideas are so different from ours and they, disposed to be thinkers, too, you have made a very radical change in their thoughts and they get stuck sometimes I guess, trying to think out your liberal ideas and put away their old

ones; and they have no one to ask, for we men-folk don't have much time to look up new ideas and so we can't help them much. I guess they talk it over among themselves a good deal, and, to tell you the truth, I think it makes them pretty uneasy sometimes. It's pretty much like putting a lot of steers in a pasture with a good fence around it. They'll feed quietly enough till they discover a break in the fence, and then nothing can keep them there; they'll go right over all fences after that unless you put a blinder over their eyes so they can't see out. I reckon you've let those women out of the lot and they're a little inclined to find fault with their grazing now. Just as long as they thought they had their rights they were contented enough, but since you set them thinking about it they chafe and chafe, and want something, and they don't know what, and couldn't get it if they did. To be frank, Mr. Langley, I am afraid you did them more harm than good, as long as they have got to live right along in the old way."

"Oh no, Mr. Merwin, I am sure that knowledge is better than ignorance if it does make them uneasy; being contented isn't all there is in life; it is getting roused, breaking up old lines of thought that makes us grow, that rolls the world of life and knowledge onward. If they are discontented they will soon communicate their uneasiness to other women who will pass it on and stir others and yet others to effort, and finally they will get into their true position through this means. No, it is better to suffer their discontent and fiercely, too, than to sit calmly by and let the world

roll over them and leave them no better off than when they came into it. 'Progress is the law of nature.' But what makes you think they are not happy?"

"Well, perhaps I have put it too strong, for it is only by little things I see the signs, but then, it would be natural they would miss you when you were there so long and right around the house so much. It is not strange if Margaret and Rena feel dull and lonesome and turn against their friends and their old ways, and I think Mrs. Stanley, too, feels, perhaps not for herself but for the girls, a bit discouraged. I find them making comparisons now, and saying things about men that are a bit unkind, and—well—they are a good deal changed all around. Perhaps it's good for them but it isn't agreeable."

"All helpful signs, Mr. Merwin. They must pass through that period to rise to a higher plane. Dissatisfaction is the first step in the upward grade. But what brings you from home at this season? Are you taking a vacation? I'm glad for the occasion of your coming, whatever it may be."

"Yes, I'm taking a long vacation from farm work. The fact is, I too, have become unsettled, I guess, for I have soured on farm work to a degree that I had to come away to seek my fortune, as the stories have it. I've put a man upon the farm in my place and come to find work and rub against the world a little harder and see what there is in it, and me; and I took the liberty to call upon you for a bit of advice. You know I have had no business education and I do not know what I can do. I felt sure you would not object to giving me

a little counsel out of your experience. I am not without money, but am naturally anxious to get to work at any honest employment that has a chance for advancement in it. It would be rather hard for me to shut myself up in the house until I get used to the change from home, but I can do anything that is best."

"Now, I'm not sure, Mr. Merwin, but you are a Godsend to us, for we want a shipping clerk that is not afraid to work and that we can trust. I am sure you will answer to both these requirements, and I think you'll soon get the run of the business and be valuable to us. I will speak to my father about it and you come to the office to-morrow to see him and I think we shall be able to make some kind of an arrangement. We have a good deal of trouble sometimes to get trusty men, and my father will be sure to give you an opportunity for advancement if you take to the work honestly, as I am sure you will."

"Well, Mr. Langley, your suggestion is as pleasant as it is unexpected, and I thank you for all you have so kindly and generously said about it, and if your father takes me, you may be sure I will bear you out in all you will say for me, and as much more as an honest purpose and earnest endeavor can get out of me."

"Give us your hand on that, Merwin. I'm sure of it, and hope this will be the beginning of a long acquaintance and friendship."

"Thank you again, and now I have trespassed on your time too long and will say good-night."

"No trespass, my dear fellow, you will come to the

office in the morning any time after nine o'clock. Good night."

The next morning found Tom promptly on hand, and the elder Mr. Langley was so pleased with his manly bearing and the reports given him by his son, he was only too glad to employ him at a generous salary, and the noon hour found him at work with the same vigor and heartiness with which he drove a plow into the soil in his father's fields at home.

His first leisure was employed in writing to his father his good fortune, after which he settled down to work in good earnest.

CHAPTER III.

Margaret Stanley.—Why She is Ill.—Goes to New York.—
Margaret at a Reception.—Meets Mr. Gordon.

MARGARET STANLEY was a character well worth attention. She was the eldest of the seven children Mrs. Stanley had borne, four of whom had blossomed into the Beyond in infancy.

She was tall and lithe, though well developed and strong looking, with a round and well balanced head, poised gracefully on a sloping pair of shoulders, and what would have been the carriage of a queen but for the years of farm work. Her silky hair was very abundant and black as night; her dark eyes were gentle but firm; her nose long and aquiline; a mouth sensitive but full, with a tendency of the lips to curl upwards at the corners. She was a woman who would command attention anywhere; one who in a drawing room with all the accessories of dress and society manners would be pronounced superb. As it was, with the self-sacrificing life she had led, plenty of hard work, no incentive to dress or to make the most of herself, she was simply a good looking, commonplace woman, with no thought of ever being anything else. She was always natural in her manners, with unvarying kindness to all and ever ready to help those who came within the sphere of her influence.

But for her own inner self, her soul existence, if she had been asked about it she would have said she had none. No thoughts of anything ever entered her mind but getting the dishes washed, the milk skimmed, the beds made, and food prepared for the table. Work, work, work, was uppermost with her. The demands of the family were great, and to bear the brunt of the burden and save her mother was her one idea. They were a harmonious, affectionate family, very pains-taking and thoughtful of one another, putting a deal of mental energy in all they did, always planning the quickest and best way, and with opportunity would have been intellectual and scholarly.

Rena was the baby, the pet of all, and although the do-nothing as yet, she was by nature thoughtful and helpful. Her life had been one ovation. Everyone loved her and vied with each other to do her bidding, and yet it had not spoiled her! She had too much character and took all the love and devotion given her as the flowers do the sunshine, ever giving as much as she received.

The advent of Mr. Langley in the family had entirely changed the current of their thought; even Mr. Stanley and his son felt the difference. The first sign in Andrew was a new suit of fashionably made clothes which he was careful to put on every night when his work was done, and in which he respected himself immensely more than formerly.

Then he took to reading of a more solid and scientific nature. Sometimes he was seen writing, no one knew what. He read to his sisters in the evenings and they

discussed the topics read, he always getting sympathy and valuable suggestions from them. He quite forgot to attend the merry-makings and parties he used to be so fond of, and came to be much of a student and recluse. In fact all the minds that had been in such an unrestful, yet passive state, were roused and fired with some new ambition, and the farm work, though honestly attended to, took a secondary place.

Mr. Stanley had a brother in New York who had amassed a fortune as a publisher and was then an owner and editor of one of the flourishing daily journals. He was without children, having lost his two sons in their boyhood; and his wife, a most sensible and cultured woman, was lonely in her elegant home and had often urged that one of the brother's daughters should spend part of the time with her. It had never been possible until now, but as winter came on Margaret drooped; she lost interest in things and complained of headaches and was always tired, and nearer to being fretful than she had ever been before.

Such an unusual state of things made the family very anxious, and at last the little Rena took the matter into her own hands and without consulting anyone, wrote to her aunt the situation of affairs. Then she proposed Margaret's going to New York, said she had been the useless member of the family long enough and she would never learn to do anything for herself as long as Madge did it all for her; now her time had come and the premises must be vacated by Madge for her especial benefit. And when one fine afternoon not long after, in walked Aunt Helen who proposed to take

the invalid home with her, the point was yielded, and as the aunt insisted that all the preparations necessary for her outfit in a city life should be made after her arrival because she had nothing else to do but attend to it, and Margaret must not be troubled with it now, the night of the third day saw them snugly ensconced in a sleeper en route for the metropolis.

This was the beginning of a new life for all. Poor Rena, whose love for Margaret was only a little short of adoration, and whose dependence upon her made her feel actually helpless without her, saw her go with a sinking heart. How could she get on without her? The work was hard and uninteresting, and she chafed under it like a colt under the harness, but she said never a word and did her best to fill her sister's place and really succeeded very well, and, in the light of the difficulties she had to encounter, very heroically, for she realized that to do her whole duty she must keep herself cheerful and happy *in spite* of difficulties. She succeeded in mastering the work and herself which was the greater task, and the winter passed blithely after all, because so busily.

To analyze the cause of Margaret's ill health seems difficult without an analogy. Let us think of a lake on a mountain top that has placidly rippled in the sun and winds, evaporating a little each day, and yet sufficiently replenished by the steady, sluggish, even flow of its hidden source, because the outlet is small and restricted. In time the current wears and undermines its channel until, after a heavy storm that floods the banks and causes increased pressure, the water

bursts its bonds and roars and tumbles, coursing wildly down the sides of the mountain into the valley below, carrying everything before it, until its mad career being run, it sinks to rest in the broad bosom of mother earth.

But what of the lake? It has a new outlet now and is no longer pent between its banks or confined there at all. A steady stream is always flowing pure, clear as crystal, and strong as only life and motion can make it; it is no more a stagnant lake, but an active, healthful stream, ever fresh, sparkling and life-giving.

So were the placid waters of Margaret's mind, stirred by the new light shed upon her by the influx of ideas communicated through Mr. Langley until there came a time when she burst away from the old train of thought where she had been confined, and in the shock, the very foundations of her nature were flooded, and as the old errors were swept from sight, and the influx of new ideas came upon her, the physical being was rent and she was tossed hither and thither, until she lay stranded on the rock of physical weakness. Then came the steady flow of healthful reasoning thought, life giving and strong, which when assimilated was to restore her to physical as well as mental vigor.

But the constant thinking, the doubt on one hand and the belief on the other, the tossing to and fro of opinion, the effort it required to do her own reasoning, completely exhausted her; she was like a broken lily after a storm, and the struggle was so violent it took much time to establish healthy action again.

Meantime, with plenty of leisure—a most unwonted

luxury—and the accessories of dress dear to every woman's heart that her aunt had quietly and bountifully provided, it being a new and very agreeable occupation for her and one which she much enjoyed, Margaret was fast recovering. At the same time it left her mind at rest (which in her aunt's opinion was the thing she most needed). She knew no woman can feel at ease unless her dress is in keeping with her surroundings. So, almost without Margaret's being aware of it, she placed in her room all the necessities and luxuries of a lady's toilet, and Margaret in a sort of apathetic way carried out her aunt's ideas with very little thought or feeling on the subject.

Five weeks had elapsed and she had become quite accustomed to the new way of life, and it fitted her like one of her own soft gloves, and she was calm and passive again, but with a new light in her face, stronger but more graceful lines in her figure, and in fact, the look of another woman than her former self about her.

The workings of the human mind are wonderful and seem mysterious because we lose sight of the fact that they are causative, while the physical troubles are only an effect. We place too much stress upon the effect and undervalue the cause. Margaret's state of health was not, as would seem at first thought, the effect of her hard work or any other external cause. It was the thorough awakening from the long mental torpor in which she had lived to a state of action that required all her mental energies, and as a too strong flow of water will burst a pipe that would bear ordinary

pressure, so, an excess of thought in new channels will weaken and disturb the physical life. Time to become adjusted to the new state of things was all she required to become strong again. She was not sick, she was only doing a new kind of work that called out a different set of energies. Previously she had trusted to others to do her thinking for her and had taken on trust what her instinct told her was not in harmony with what she saw in nature, and with what came through even her limited experience. She was, however, only dimly conscious of this until the awakening came. Henceforth she could not use only inherited ideas, could no longer be a maternal or paternal storage-room, but as old Leibnitz complained of his pupil Frederick the Great, she "wanted to know the why of the why."

After Margaret's health had time to recover from the dazed condition of mind in which she had been, she went much into society, and now at the end of four months we find her one clear cold night in February, dressing for a reception to be given in honor of a newly made bride. She entered into society with an honesty and zest that was characteristic of her; she dressed for an evening entertainment as energetically as she would sweep a room, but yet with no haste, one might almost say with a *repose* of motion; for while she put every pin into its proper place and fastened every hook or button at once and without fuss or hurry, yet she lingered lovingly over every fastening and put it in place carefully, almost tenderly, giving a little pat here and there, and thoroughly enjoying the operation, for she would on no account consent to have a maid.

She knew her life in the city would be short and she did not wish to go back to her country home which she so earnestly longed to see, enervated by her city habits and unfitted to take up her life there as of old, for she longed to relieve Rena who was really getting so much self-reliance, but as Margaret knew, fighting such hard battles for it. Rena was not made for housework and found it irksome, yet she bravely overcame her natural feeling and made herself do what seemed to be her duty and do it well.

But let us take a look at beautiful Margaret in her evening costume, for very beautiful she is. Her queenly figure was made more imperial and statuesque by the folds of the heavy white silk gown she wore, made with straight lines and simple though rich effects of the styles in vogue at that time, a demi-train over which was draped in Greek fashion an exquisite pattern of old lace with the beautiful arm left bare, and a glimmer of the fair neck modestly exposed in answer to the demands of fashion. Her beautiful glossy hair was arranged on top of her head in loose waves, with a brilliant diamond butterfly poised on its coils.

Beautiful Margaret indeed! And so said the crowds of people as they parted to allow the Stanley party to approach the hostess, and so said one pair of eyes especially, whose gaze followed her in a maze of fascinated delight as she swept past and was lost in the crowd. A sigh of pleasure escaped from the owner of those eyes, and he fell into line and followed the party, keeping in sight of the coils of midnight hair until the crush was passed, and by some little maneu-

vering he came near enough to have touched her hand. Much to his delight he saw a gentleman of his acquaintance approach the party and address the object of his admiration. In a moment he stood by his friend's side asking an introduction which was readily obtained. Our "pair of eyes" were set in a head of fine contour, with a covering of light brown hair, a fine complexion, a moustache, and long side whiskers; the eyes were an indescribable blue that sometimes looked brown, and were ever changing and restless, but open and honest as eyes in a fashionable man's head can be. For "society" is a system of deception and suavity, that would be very pleasant if sincere, and the worst of it is, the deception is imperative under present conditions, and no one *can* be perfectly honest who is "in society." The noblest men and women are curtailed in freedom. They are obliged from motives of policy and politeness to do every day and hour what they feel to be insincere and dishonest.

If Mrs. Grundy calls they are obliged to receive her pleasantly, say they are glad to see her and hope she will renew her visit, and much more of the same sort that is utterly antagonistic to them. Really they hate Mrs. Grundy and are jealous of her; perhaps she has a better position and more money than they, and if she has she is probably arrogant and takes the liberty to be disagreeable. But one must "swallow it all" and cater to her likes and dislikes, and put away one's own disgust, while the poor seamstress for whom you have a real respect because of her nobility of character, and whom one truly likes, and whose society one would

enjoy, must be banished to an upper room, treated as a subordinate and kept away from one's dear five hundred.

One may be glad to steal away to her, climbing the stair to sink into a chair in her quiet room for the only repose and peace to be found from morning to morning again, but one is not allowed to stay, for presently another summons comes and one must go down to do over the tiresome work of entertaining some uncongenial guest.

But to return to our hero of the eyes who had just been presented to our peerless Margaret. They surely made a fine pair as they stood in the midst of the brilliant throng. She with her midnight hair and eyes, her face scarcely less white than the glimmering robe she wore in all her stateliness; and he a shade taller, very erect, with a superb and manly bearing, showing a spirit naturally gentle but one that had never been curbed by circumstances and had not been wont to consider itself subject to any but its own sweet will,—will, which shone through the starry eyes with a power that only a strong reserve force could give, at least so mildly and yet merrily, for he had an inexhaustible fund of good nature and was the embodiment of wit and good fellowship. He was an Englishman of high birth and culture, accustomed to carry all before him as he willed.

Margaret stood listening with her sweet gravity to his bright remarks, hardly noting his evident desire to please and interest her, or his looks of admiration, and quite unaware that they were the observed of all ob-

servers as their striking looks necessarily attracted attention. "What a magnificent pair they are," remarked Mrs. Stanley to her husband who chanced to be near her. "I never saw Margaret mated before." "Yes, Gordon is a fine fellow and if you were a match-maker, now would be your chance, but our Margaret does not look as if she would tolerate interference with her affairs, and I should not advise any one to try it, for although she is so gentle, I am sure if she were aroused there is a smouldering volcano there that would throw out fire and smoke against anything that interfered with her ideas of right and strict justice. She is a jewel of a woman and worthy of the best man in the universe."

"I doubt if she ever marries though," said Mrs. Stanley. "She is developing peculiar ideas on that subject and being so entirely conscientious she will be likely to carry them out if she comes to any conclusion."

"Ah! is that so? She is such a quiet puss I had no idea she had radical opinions on any particular subject. If she has, I am sure she will hold to them. What are they, pray?"

"This is hardly the place to tell you, but some time when there is opportunity I will lead her to talk to you about them, for I think they are well worth considering. It seems last summer a young man from a neighboring city met with an accident by his horse's falling in front of their house, that caused an injury to his ankle which kept him a prisoner with them for some weeks. He was a free thinker (which seems to mean he did his own thinking on natural subjects in a natural way) quite a

philosopher in fact, and he revolutionized the ideas of the whole family and woke Margaret especially from her mental sleep, and her vigorous intellect took the cue and is rapidly carrying out and evolving new theories that if brought to the attention of the people would do much to revolutionize the public mind."

"But it's getting late, and if you find Margaret is ready, we had best go home, I think." And they passed through the throng to Margaret's side.

"Well, Gordon," said Mr. Stanley, who had known him before, "we are sorry to interfere with your pleasure, but Miss Stanley is so recently an invalid we carry her off home earlier than we otherwise should."

"Why, Uncle Charles, I am distressingly well now, and I do not get fatigued at all, but I am quite ready to go if you wish."

"I shall be obliged to acquiesce then," said Mr. Gordon, "and if Miss Stanley will allow me to call and finish our very interesting conversation I shall not be quite inconsolable."

"Oh certainly," said Margaret, "I should like very much to continue the subject," and after making their adieux to the hostess they withdrew, Mr. Gordon carefully wrapping Margaret's cloak around her shoulders and attending her to the carriage.

CHAPTER IV.

Margaret's Reverie.—Gordon Calls on Margaret.—Conversation.—Astrology.—Theosophy.

MARGARET'S country habits precluded any morning nap and she was always up early no matter how late she was out at night, and the next morning saw her with her toilet made at eight o'clock and sitting before the glowing grate fire in a pretty morning gown of crimson silk bordered with swansdown, her feet encased in the daintiest of slippers, and her hair in a low coil at the neck, making a most charming picture and lost in a profound reverie.

First she reproached herself for remaining at her Uncle's wasting her time and taking her ease, as she thought, when the work on the farm must go on anyway, and her mother and Rena were making such sacrifice to let her remain. And then she thought of all the work in the world that must be done by some one, and how many tired bodies and aching hearts there were, and she, made of no better stuff than these, deserving no better lot, was living in such idleness and luxury, and the world's misery not a whit abated. She sprang from her luxurious chair as though the bitterness of it stung her very soul, and pacing rapidly up and down the room she resolved to return to-morrow. She would not put off what must and ought to be done,

and the dear old farm came back to her and filled her with love and longing. But after a few turns around the room such a sense of fatigue stole over her from the violence of her emotions, she was obliged to sit down again quietly and take her ease. She saw that while seeming well as long as she was tranquil, she yet had not recovered strength enough to resume her duties at home. So, her conscience being at rest, she recalled the previous evening and her introduction to Mr. Gordon, saying to herself very naively, that he was the most agreeable man she had met, and his evident admiration for herself was far from unwelcome and she looked forward to his call and the interrupted conversation with pleasure. Our Margaret was a born aristocrat, she loved the highest and best the earth afforded, but her ideas of what was best and highest were quite out of the common.

A noble nature, a student and helper of humanity, accompanied by refinement and culture, with position and money, and all that these could bring, seemed to be the acme of human desire, but money and the position it brings with the other elements left out, even admitting the refinement in the ordinary sense, were to her insufficient to make a full, well-rounded life. This is what we are,—or should be,—aiming at if we desire the highest attainment this world can bring us.

True nobility is unselfish and thoughtful for others, and a person in the present state of society who is not interested in the great humanitarian questions that agitate the public mind was to Margaret wanting in the higher elements of thought, or greatly lacking in

development, and that which had most attracted her to Mr. Gordon was the ease with which he led the conversation into those channels.

"Water seeks its level," "like seeks like," and human minds naturally run together whose interests are in the same direction and he had given much thought to humanitarian subjects, being truly desirous to be a philanthropist in its fullest sense.

He had recognized in her a "familiar spirit," and discovered that to them both the same measures for the accomplishment of the reconstruction of society seemed necessary. This was very gratifying to Miss Stanley who had failed to meet any one who saw things as she did. Later when Mr. Gordon's name was announced she received him with real pleasure and they plunged into the subject left unfinished the evening before, at once.

"As we were saying last night, Miss Stanley, there does seem to be a general change of ideas all over the world. Even poor Russia is beginning to see some results, small though they are, from her attack of Nihilism and the bars of human suffering seem to be let down in some degree. The reigning powers feel the eyes of the world upon them, and, although it seems hard for them to comprehend that there can be any other method than that of brute force, of punishment through physical suffering, yet it is slowly dawning upon *their* dull minds that the thought of the age is criticising them very severely and they must move on with the world's progress or be crushed. 'No nation, any more than any individual can live to itself. Its relation to

other countries makes it imperative that it keep abreast with the times, or as near to it as it can.'

"Many changes in a small way have taken place which in the aggregate amount to determining factors in the fate of nations, and the people all over the world seem to have made about an equal advance, according to the rate of progress already attained."

"Yes, indeed," said Margaret, "you are quite right. To me there seems to be what might be called a breaking up, a general upheaval of old ideas, an advance in humanitarian methods the world over. To be sure, it seems to be small and slow in view of what ought to be, but as all growth is slow we must not despise the 'day of small things' but be thankful for any advance. Stuart Mills says, 'the greatest reforms come the most slowly.' What do you suppose is the reason of a movement so general?"

"It would be presumptuous, indeed, in me to try to give any reason from my own observation," said the visitor. "But I think it is the law of nature to grow in cycles. There is a rhythm that we often lose sight of, the ups and downs, the ins and outs of life, the night and day, the high and low, the ebb and flow, the mountains and valleys, the progression and retrogression of planetary systems, all are indications of the beating of Dame Nature's great heart.

"We plant a bulb in the dark, cold ground, seeming to do the very thing that would stop its growth and kill out any life there might be in it, but instead of that we only place it in the elements that are best adapted to its advancement, and when its night is past,

and by the law of its being it has pushed itself up into the light, we see the upward movement is the result of its travail in the darkness and night of its life. So nations have their time of dark when ignorance and suffering of every form seem to prevail, and they groan and travail in sorrow and pain until at last the light is reached and the growth is above ground and perceptible, and we feel that something has been and is being done in real advancement.

“When I was traveling in the East, in India more especially, I came across many strange ideas that are helpful towards a solution of the great problem of life, for if not wholly true, there is always a kernel in every theory, and taking them all together, one sees the drift is the same, though methods differ.

“The astrological theory for a few years back has been that the more ponderous planets have made transits that cause the change of mentality, and this has, as it were, spiritualized our inhabitants by the long night of unrest, their close proximity to us has given. Their position on the 20th of December, 1899, being, as it is said, the same as at the crucifixion of Christ, has caused such great perturbations, through their magnetic attractions and repulsions, and consequent uplifting of the spiritual nature of man, seen only as signs of new growth of a different nature from the old, bringing into play a different set of faculties, which we speak of as spiritual, and which throws the dominating power toward mind instead of matter, the old methods of force and injustice, being compelled to yield to equity

and justice in accordance with the divine instead of the human law, or to make the human law more divine.

“There is a theory that the cause of the changing spots on the sun is the magnetic influence of the planets that by their different aspects and combinations of aspects, and by the laws of reflection and refraction, they show upon the sun which acts as a mirror, their condition and position, an expert being able to tell by the color and form of these spots what particular planets have the strongest influence for the time being. This explains certain seasons of sickness and disaster, that are said to be caused by the spots on the sun, the sign which that body inhabits then having its influence, These signs being points in space, or imaginary lines, determined by numbers of degrees that a planet arrives at, where its influence is bad or good as the case may be. The sun and moon being considered as planets because they have an individuality, and having their influence equally with the rest according to their power, the constant revolution of each planet producing combinations that change results in the whole cosmos, so each system affects every other system. A most stupendous scheme that shows, not causes, divine law. And if poor humanity was not content to deal with effects instead of causes and would study this science, the chances of the world’s advancement would be much greater. It is said by noted astrologers that the position of the planets on December 2d, 1899, was the same as at the crucifixion of Christ, and the advent of another Christ is looked for in the early part of the

Twentieth Century, and as this is said to be the woman's century it is predicted it will be a woman.

"This theory of the sun's spots properly understood, seems to be a reasonable one. Astronomers ridicule and despise astrology, but they have as yet found no theory that satisfies them. It would be well for them to investigate before they condemn a science that has a natural and logical reason.

"I think this is to be an age in which people will be governed by prejudices less than formerly, one in which mind will throw off old trammels and courageously strike out after new truths."

"This is really very interesting," exclaimed Margaret. "What is more delightful than to learn to catch the breeze of new theories, to feel the wind of progress rushing on and brushing your cheek with its inspiring breath? To gain knowledge must truly be the object of life; but do tell me further. What other sciences did you learn about?"

"Why not so much about any, only a smattering, just to catch the idea. There are the Theosophists who teach among other things the cycle theory; and think now, we are at the close of a cycle, which means a period of time, say a thousand years; but a thousand years of spiritual growth and not years of three hundred and sixty-five days. They claim life to be in circles or rounds—not a complete circle, but a spiral—in which every circle or cycle the world rounds takes a plane higher; that all which exists now always did exist, and always will, only in different forms or combinations; that evolution, combination of forms in the

course of evolution, produces new types out of old material; but this in the spiritual world, in the unseen, in that part of the universe which is the Life, the motive power; and this reality, this substance, reflects upon the visible world what gives us conscious recognition, and that *consciousness* is the result of this natural (spiritual) evolution. That we are at the close of such a cycle, the advent of Neptune into the sign Gemini shows, Neptune being a spiritual planet and Gemini an intellectual sign. This is, of course, a very insufficient explanation of a great truth, and only shows that these and all sciences play into each other's hands. All have a central point in common, and all the same trend. And if this be true, and the tendency is to make mankind better and happier, we shall none of us be sorry for the approach of the new cycle and what it must bring us.

"But I am prolonging my stay beyond all reason, Miss Stanley and can only excuse myself on the ground of the interest I have in the subject of our conversation, as well as in the audience."

"I am equally interested, Mr. Gordon, and have not felt that your call was a long one."

"Do you go to hear the Walkyrie to-night, or are you not fond of Wagner?"

"Yes, I believe we are to go," she said, "I am very fond of Wagner, though I suppose my uneducated ears lose much of the beauty and soul of his compositions. I am unfortunate in not having had my musical taste cultivated as I could wish."

"A natural taste does not need cultivation so much,"

was his gracious reply. "*You* cannot help getting the soul of it. But if you will permit me it shall be my pleasure to call your attention to any points I may understand, from having repeatedly heard it."

"Thank you, you are kind. I shall be glad of your instruction," and with friendly adieux he took his leave.

CHAPTER V.

Langley and Tom.—Humanitarianism.—Corinne.—A Death Scene.—A Poor Man.—Why He Was Ignorant.

WHILE Margaret has been in the height of a New York "season," and Rena in the depths of her housework, Mr. Langley and our friend Tom have been deeply immersed in the business and humanitarian world, and have become firm friends. Both were honorable and upright, both from their natural selves thought alike, but the difference in education caused a sufficient unlikeness of thought, to make their intercourse spicy and enjoyable; for there must be friction among friends to secure friendship. Perfect unison does not produce harmony: it hastens weariness.

Tom was all eagerness to learn the ways of the world, and was given to exploring and investigating in all walks of life. Sunday morning might find him a well dressed attendant at some fashionable church, and in the afternoon in working dress that brought him near them, he would be on the streets frequented by the lowest class of people, talking with this one and that one, getting at their inner life, rendering a service cheerily, where it was needed, always a help, always welcome everywhere, and in this way getting right at the heart of things; and by contact with all classes, absolutely knowing the pulse beat of humanity.

He was strong and healthy, and could bear any amount of what would fatigue any one else: had excellent judgment, a fine mind for analysis and classification, and was noted for his thoroughness in all he undertook, either mentally or physically. In fact he had the making of a hero in his broad and deep life.

Mr. Langley was often with him in his perambulations and many an adventure did they have together; and an opportunity to do good was never neglected by either of them; both were well known in all parts of the town, and many a young lady of the elite felt her heart beats accelerated at their approach, for Tom was a society man, too. He was fond of saying, he meant to be an all around individual.

Herbert Langley had a sister, a bright, pretty girl who had been much petted and spoiled at home, and was willful and wayward when it pleased her ladyship, but really good-hearted and kind, when she thought of it, or could make it convenient. She was thoughtless but not heartless.

She was much like her mother who was French by birth, and had worked in the factory before her marriage, and had won her way to the heart of her husband (a noble man) who was at that time an overseer in her department, by her pretty face and piquant ways.

She was as near an approach to being frivolous, as a matron of her years often gets, certainly under the influence of so good a man as her husband. Corinne was her pride and idol though she was very proud of her handsome and dignified son; but she hardly understood him, and was a bit afraid of his high and mighty ways as she called them.

One warm but lovely morning in June, we find mother and daughter on the veranda of their elegant home, which was flanked with trees, shrubbery, well kept walks and lovely flowers.

“Mamma dear, how insufferably dull it is to-day. What shall I do with myself? I don’t want to read, or practice, or sing; my embroidery is tiresome, it is too hot to walk, and there’s no where in particular to drive and nothing to go for, and to sit here and think, with nothing to think of, is unbearable. Do tell me what to do or I shall be cross.” And she gave a petulant shake to her skirts that set the hammock in which she lay, swinging violently, and then viciously set her dainty foot down to stop it. Evidently something had gone wrong and she was out of sorts, poor darling.

“Why, Corinne, my child, what is the matter? You are not often like this. What is troubling you?”

“Oh nothing—I don’t know, I’m sure. I wonder what Tom was doing that he did not come out last night; I told him I wanted to see him especially, I wanted to talk with him about something. He never comes when I ask him. I presume he was down on Vale Street at some workman’s meeting and going home with some work girl, to protect her from something or other. I’ve no patience with him. Those low girls can protect themselves. It’s all nonsense. I believe he just likes to. He cares enough sight more for those girls than for people of his own class. I think it is low of him to spend so much time among such people. One would think he was a pauper himself, or had been.”

"Well, my child," said the mother, "you know Tom was only a farmer. To be sure he is nice, and we have made a great deal of him since he has been here, but you must not expect as much of him as if he had been brought up a gentleman's son."

"Gentleman's son! Mamma, aren't farmers gentlemen? Talk about gentlemen! where will you find one like him? He's a gentleman through and through! You are never contented unless you are saying something against Tom, and he's always so kind to you, and to all of us."

"Now, dear, don't misunderstand. I did not mean to speak against Tom. Perhaps he was at Jones' reception last night, and they are not paupers."

"I should think not, with all their millions. That Jones girl is trying her best to captivate him; I had rather he would go to Vine Street. But he can go to the Jones' or any where else for all I care; I shan't ask him to come out here again; I don't care where he goes."

"That's right, dear, it isn't worth while for you to think about it. There are plenty other young men. There's Will Atwood, with quantities of money and handsome as a picture, and such a splendid turn-out. You know he is every way desirable, according to my way of thinking, and he worships the ground you walk on."

"Now mamma, you positively need not mention that man to me again, I detest him! He isn't to be spoken of in the same day with Tom Merwin. He knows just nothing at all except to pay compliments that he does

not mean. All the sewing girls in town might get waylaid and murdered for all he cares, and one can't talk with him five minutes without getting tired of him. You might spend a whole day with Tom and never know the time had gone. Dear me, I wish he would come." (Wistfully.)

"Well, if he don't come some one else will. What difference does it make?"

"Difference? Indeed! How absurd you are, mamma," and with a faint yawn she curled her white arm under her head, closed her pretty eyes, and was soon fast asleep and dreaming of Tom.

Meantime, Tom was hurrying through his business to go and see a poor man who was dying and with whom he had spent the night in which Corinne had so resented his absence. The probabilities were, he would not live through the day and he longed to be there to comfort the family and do what he could to soothe the sick man's last moments.

Without waiting to get his supper, Tom hurried off and after a rapid walk, reached the house.

He entered softly, to find the family gathered around the bed watching the long and deep breaths of the separation of the spirit from its earthly limitations, the throes of nature as it is rent, by the longings of the spirit to escape into a life of greater opportunities, to flee from its flesh environment to its new and greater freedom, its glad release, and ability to soar toward God and a fuller life.

True, this was a poor and ignorant man, as we say, who had but little idea of God, and who did not even

know he had a soul, (for no one had ever taken the pains to tell him) and who had been vicious, perhaps a criminal, though he did not know it in any sense of realizing what it meant. He had acted as he could with a mind in such dense ignorance, and not always as a man should, perhaps; his reasoning powers were almost wholly obscured; he lived like a dog who turned a wheel to press cheese in a farmer's house. When he was put on the wheel he walked and walked, because he must; the wheel would not let him stop; when he got tired, he growled and muttered, and looked ugly, and when the wheel stopped he lay down and went to sleep. If any one disturbed him he showed his teeth and snapped at the disturber who had to keep out of his way, or get bitten. He was a terror except to the people who made him work and of whom he was afraid. This dog did what he *had* to, and because he had to; he did not like it, and he revenged himself when he got a chance, for what he thought were his wrongs, or in the absence of thought, because he felt ugly. Yet he was a dog of fine disposition when he was not made to do what he felt did not belong to him to do; he loved the children and even the cat was not afraid of him.

So this poor man who was now being released, was naturally good; but the hard circumstances of his life, his ancestry coming from even greater depths of ignorance, his compulsory struggle when he wanted to live and grow like the trees, because he loved to.—Ah! who shall say he hath not done what he could? Who shall dare condemn him for what he did not know? Jesus said, "Father forgive them for they know not

what they do." Buddha, "All sufferings arise from ignorance." Socrates, "Men act wrongly only because they form erroneous judgments." Let us ask ourselves the question seriously,—how much more do we deserve at the hands of justice, than this poor man who, like the fish that are born and live in the mammoth cave, without eyes, because they have no use for them, know so little of what is going on in the great and beautiful world outside of their environment!

And so this poor wretch was making his last struggle to get out of his mammoth cave into the light of God's love. Joy and peace go with him.

He had seemed to be gone out of consciousness, but at Tom's entrance to the room, as though a fresh breath of heaven's kindness and love had reached him, he opened his eyes, smiled, made a feeble attempt to extend his hand and was gone, into the Beyond.

The wife and children broke into lamentations and wailings, but Tom's hand was on their shoulder, or resting tenderly on the heads of the little ones, his soothing voice speaking words of comfort and cheer, and ere long a degree of quiet was restored, and with neighborly help, the last earthly duties were performed for the truly *living* and awakened man, the necessities of the family provided for, and our friend was at liberty to seek happier surroundings.

He stopped at a restaurant on his way home and had a light lunch, then went directly to his room, sank into an easy chair and a reverie at the same time. And here we leave him for the present, knowing well the nature of his thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.

Beautiful Snow.—Winter Morning.—Breakfast.—Church.—
Tom.—Rena's Thoughts and Dream.

WHAT is more beautiful than one of the clear, cold, cloudless mornings in mid-winter in the country, when the whole world is covered with a pure white mantle, shining, glorious and beautiful, in the bright sunlight, when the very spirit of purity seems to be abroad and heaven's own time at hand?

So it was on this morning I speak of, when Rena looked out from her chamber window in the early dawn. Not a path, not a break in the clear glittering crystal, and it would take but a small effort of imagination to people the meadows with fairies and see them dancing in high glee in the bright clear air. Only we should have to remember the fairies do not like cold, and if you opened the window the sharp air would make you think something other than fairies nipped your fingers and nose. So Rena thought as she closed the sash and hastened down the stairs. But once in the bright cheery kitchen, she forgot the cold and flew around like the substantial fairy she was to get the breakfast. Andrew and the hired man soon came stamping in with exclamations about the weather, the dog frolicked and struggled to get through the snow, the pigeons flew to the door and strutted around cooing for their

breakfast and everything was glad, this beautiful morning.

I like to linger over that breakfast. The snowy cloth, the delicious ham and eggs, the baked potatoes, the luscious hot biscuit and honey, the nice little plate of pickled pepper, and those steaming buckwheat cakes and maple syrup, with a fragrant cup of hot coffee, makes one wish such breakfasts might last indefinitely and one's appetite and capacity string out an accompaniment. But all things must have an end and we must needs tell the rest of the tale.

This delightful day was Sunday, and as was the habit of the household the work was hurried through, the big sleigh and the sleek horses brought out, and leaving the hired man with the cat and dog for company, the family drove to church to find a goodly number of people assembled and among them "our Tom!"

It was the first time he had been home and he was almost overwhelmed with handshakes and comments on his appearance, but nothing hindered him from keeping watch for the Stanley sleigh or being on hand to assist the ladies to alight when it drove up.

"Why Tom!" said Mrs. Stanley and Rena in a breath, "when did you come? How glad we are to see you. How well you look." And Tom kissed Mrs. Stanley heartily as he would his mother, but Rena—well, she was bending down to brush the snow off her dress and did not see. There was no chance to talk for it was time for the service to begin, and they entered the church and were soon singing with fervor, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

It was difficult for Tom to keep his eyes or his mind on the good minister with Rena's sweet face just across the aisle, but he managed to behave decorously and no one wondered to see him take a seat in the Stanley sleigh after service.

Perhaps a little heart did not go pit-a-pat and a bright blush come to a pair of cheeks to see the great manly, well-dressed, handsome fellow Tom had grown into, and their owner was very demurely quiet and gave others a chance to talk, quite contrary to her usual custom. She was casting about in her mental storehouse for remembrances of the somewhat awkward young man in brown overalls and with the two brimming milk pails she had so often seen him carry. She could hardly believe her own eyes though they were very glad eyes indeed, and she blushed crimson when she thought how she was ashamed to have him walk home with her when Mr. Langley was there.

Was she happy? Well, it seemed very much like it when he lifted her out of the sleigh and with one swing of his strong arms set her on the piazza out of the snow. She tingled from head to foot with the old-time pleasure, and hastened into the house to hide her happiness for "she wasn't going to let him see how glad she was, for really (in an attempt to cheat herself) she had not missed him so very much."

And he? He felt a foot taller and his heart swelled to such proportions there seemed danger of its bursting its bonds, and with the aid of his arms enveloping the little figure entirely, in its tumultuous beatings. But

such catastrophe was averted and quite to his surprise he walked into the house after her, much the same as other mortals do.

And now with her wraps laid aside, her wayward curls brushed as smooth as possible, and a dainty white apron over her pretty gown, we see her bustling about to lay the table for dinner, Bounce tagging at her feet as though he was dimly aware that his day was over, and he must suffer the bitter pangs of jealousy in silence. This was a new delight to Tom for he had never seen Rena do anything but enjoy herself. Perhaps she was doing that now, he thought, but (authors being privileged) I know better; she would much rather have sat nestled close to Tom with her hand in his, talking, talking, talking together, to hear the melody of his voice if nothing more, and she execrated the housework inwardly and outwardly, smiled serenely and pattered her little feet across the floor back and forth as though her whole happiness lay in the coming dinner.

Description is perilous in the presence of readers who may not have recovered from the breakfast, so I forbear, but the dinner was thoroughly enjoyed, while Tom told them about his life in town, about Mr. Langley and the family, and Rena remembered the picture that fell from his pocket in the description of Corinne.

They were all, and especially Andrew, interested in the humanitarian work, and the fresh breeze brought to them from the world at large was invigorating and inspiring, for their hearts were in all reform and open

to all new methods. Toward evening the sisters drove over, and after a pleasant call took Tom off to his father and mother who were impatient to have him to themselves.

How delightful it was to have Tom to think of again! After our little girl was well tucked under the sheets and the light put out, she acknowledged to herself she had missed him dreadfully and the winter had been long and lonesome, though she had covered it up for herself so thoroughly; and then what a pang came when she thought he would have to go back and leave her again, and the thought there might be another girl he liked better rose up before her like Hamlet's Ghost to scare her out of happiness, and she felt it would only be what she deserved when she was so mean as to be ashamed of him. And now it flashed over her that *she* was nothing but a green country girl and it was Tom's turn to be ashamed of her, and in her pain she painted herself so terribly awkward, plain and outre, that in spite of the cold she arose and lighted her lamp and in her trailing white gown stood shivering before the mirror taking a good look at herself to see if she was "so very homely" and how she really did look anyway, for she had never thought much about it before. Her first glance was somewhat reassuring and a good long look quite satisfied her on that point (for who does not recognize a beautiful girl when they see one, even though it is one's self), and her spirits rose accordingly.

And so the busy brain played at pros and cons until the pretty eyes closed and she was off to dreamland, driving a pair of reindeer over the city houses and

looking down the chimneys to see if she might find a young lady whom Tom loved, but she could find nothing but poor, dirty, ragged children and she saw Tom delivering a lecture to animals, tigers, bears, leopards, dogs, cats, snakes, jackals, and a flock of ducks and geese that flew about and flapped their wings in his face and made a great noise over nothing; and then came great confusion and a leopardess leaped upon him and fastened her teeth in his throat and she awoke with a start to find it was broad daylight and she was being called.

Four days were all Tom could spare from his business and they were made the most of, and Rena's promise of correspondence made the parting somewhat easier for both. But the days seemed long and the work wearisome and she had to bring all her cheerfulness to bear upon the situation to get on at all comfortably, the letters from Tom and Margaret being her chief delight.

Upon the arrival of our hero at his own rooms he found a card of invitation from Corinne to a reception at her house that evening that he felt he must accept. He hastily dressed, and taking a cab, arrived just late enough to make his willful little hostess indignantly pretty and to call out from him so earnest an apology she was happy for the rest of the evening.

Being so familiar a friend she called upon him for all sorts of assistance, and caused many sly looks from the members of the party who were on the lookout for gossip, and before the evening was over pretty Corinne and unconscious Tom were, figuratively speak-

ing, yoked in the bonds of matrimony and had settled down like other sensible folk, Rena notwithstanding. Corinne was happy and confiding, and her guest gallant and helpful, little knowing the consequences of that evening's pleasure.

CHAPTER VII.

Langley Calls Upon Tom.—They Discuss the Socialist Problem.—Difficulties.—Solution.

THE next day's business having been attended to, we find Mr. Langley and his friend Tom cosily seated in the rooms of the latter, prepared to talk over his visit to his country home; for Mr. Langley was almost as interested as Tom in what concerned those who had been so kind to him. They were talking over the changes that had taken place since the day his horse's unlucky step had thrown him, a stranger, on the hospitality of the Stanleys.

"How marvelous is life," said Langley, "and how it hinges on the smallest events, like the stumbling of a horse for instance; and our (seeming) greatest misfortunes bring so much good to ourselves and others! If only the one circumstance of our friendship had arisen, and the outgrowth of your work among the poor had been the result, it would have seemed marvelous, but when we see the changes that have come to all the rest of us, not the least of which has come to Andrew, we may well be profoundly stirred."

"Yes, Andrew's book is wonderful, a great success; and no one two years ago would have dreamed of his doing such a piece of work. A farmer's life is such a quiet one, compared with the rest of the world. His

thinking apparatus gets rusty, but let a new field be opened to him and all the dormant powers in him spring to life; and the result is often more marked than in a man who is in the swim and grind all the time as we in town are. Andrew has proven this beyond a doubt.

“Margaret too, in the revulsion of feeling that came to her from your eye openers has blossomed out into full life, or so I should judge from the reading of some of the letters shown me. She is a rare girl and will yet make her mark in the world. Rena from her budding womanhood has sprung into a fuller life too, has developed into an energetic housekeeper and a self-sacrificing and noble character, though she has lost none of her bright ways nor sunny temper. It could not be otherwise than that it should have extended somewhat to my own family and others in the neighborhood. My sisters have caught the spirit and are bringing forth good fruit; to say nothing of many others who have caught inspiration, and all from a rolling stone under a horse’s foot.”

“Yes, it seems like a fairly tale, looked at from the surface, but if we really knew what went before in the unseen, we might find the accident to be only the culmination of a series of events in the lives of us all that would seem perfectly simple and natural. Really, my mind must have been absorbing just the class of information that was needed to give the impetus the other minds were prepared for; and that is the way all miracles, so called, come about. I had been educated for that purpose, and it was all a result of Law.”

"I believe the world moves that way. We look only to the surface of things, as a rule, and make no note of the underlying causes: we see only effects."

"But public opinion is under wonderful revolution just now; the whole world is in a ferment. Thrones totter, the power of royalty wanes, might which has made right shivers as it falls into impotency. That which has been weak is becoming strong; the cry now being 'The People,' let the oppressed go free, down with monopolies, up with individualism! Equal rights for all; an injustice to one is an injustice to all. The age of apathy is passing; *action* is the word! Every man and woman is beginning to think for himself or herself and inherited prejudice is passing. The degraded and poor are rousing from their lairs; looking around in the broad sunshine, the free, pure air of Heaven, seeing the beautiful things of life, and asking themselves, why is this? Why am I living in poverty and filth with hardly enough to keep breath in my body, and this other man (with just the same elements in him, bones and sinews, flesh and blood, a heart that pulsates no different from mine, with only the five senses that I have, with much the same emotions playing through his mind,—love, hate, courage, fear, etc.), reveling in luxury? Why am I deprived of all these good things that he has? Have I not the responsibility of my life, as he of his? Must I not work? Do I not fill my niche in life as he does? Alas! Why? And the cry goes on among them; this small word big with import, until it seems the air is filled with it.

"The rich man quakes because of it, for he needs

must ask himself, why? and find no sufficient reason. The monopolist who riots in his millions racks his brain for a plausible story with which to entrench himself in his vested rights: the work-slave battering at the gates with ever increasing vigor to bring him to his senses and out of his stronghold, to make him see his danger and the remedy, and bring about the changes that must come by peaceful means, both knowing that it cannot be so brought about. The monopolist is as much a creature of circumstance as is the victim of monopoly, and those who ride in the car of progress are as impotent as those it over-rides, to stay its course or guide it in its path. The impulse is from behind as well as before. The long wearisome road it has traveled, the millions it has crushed, all cry out, all give it the impetus to climb this last hill of difficulty, that shall send the tide of economic revolution down on the other side in such havoc that worlds shall tremble. The backward swing of the pendulum will cause such a recoil as the world has not known, my dear fellow, unless human foresight fails. Then the calm after the storm, the adjustment of forces, and we move on again in a new and better order of things."

"You have said it well," said Tom. "Your picture is so vivid, I can plainly see struggling humanity crushed and bleeding under institutional and constitutional inequalities, and hear the shrieks and groans of the victims. Ugh! It makes me shiver."

"But let us see," said Herbert, "if something cannot be done to avert this awful catastrophe that now seems imminent? Let us try to look at it a little in detail."

“The laborer has inherited his lot, generally. Of course there are exceptions, that from untoward circumstances have fallen from a higher (as we call it) estate, but as a rule, the poor man’s father was poor before him; both were reared in poor surroundings; both lack education and opportunity. The mothers were equally poor and more oppressed, for, in addition to the general poverty which the husband shared, the wife had the oppression of her subjection to him,—her marital slavery in which all women, rich and poor must share. The golden chains of riches and power were *chains*, and had to be *asked for*, often of an unwilling almoner. The ennobling role of motherhood was performed under just as much compulsion in the rich man’s home, as in the want and squalor of the hovel and hut. No matter how much her outraged nature cries out against it she was as verily a slave as the Southern negro, in whatever walk of life she found herself. Her heart was heavy with its own private griefs though her role was uncomplainingly filled. And her heavy soul transmitted to her child the sodden weight of her own mental depression, in addition to the ills incident to the father’s want of means to procure physical comfort for his family. Could you expect this man, or these men, to have the spirit to rise up and battle with their more fortunate neighbors in their race for life? Was not everything both in his own nature and his surroundings calculated to keep him down?

“We blame the working man for not seeing the situation, for not wisely using the power that is in his own hands; for not recognizing the fact that voting, or

fighting, he outnumbered and could control, if he were not generally too sodden in his intellect, too apathetic in his habit of thought to see that he might be master. What could we expect of a man that had always been so enslaved; can he rise above his condition? Would he be a wiser, better master than his masters? As well might the valley rise to the level of the mountain; as well might the glassy river which reflects so clearly the beautiful clouds, aspire to sail on the blue ether of Heaven's dome. What then? Shall he plod along in dumb discontent and the world take no notice? Shall the more fortunate man outrage his own nature by passing him by, ignoring the divinity in rags? No, a thousand times no! We must lift up our brother, we must know that as long as he remains a weight to himself, he is a drag upon every man and a reproach to society. If I am on a mountain top, shall I fail in striving to lift up my fellow man who has fallen into a pit at my feet?

"Now Tom, as I look at it, the responsibility for the renovation of the present system rests with the middle man, just such fellows as you and I, and a host of us who are both higher and lower but who are neither on the pinnacle of riches or in the pit of poverty. It seems to me, both of these classes are barred out. We must compel them to move, we must study methods, must rouse the sleeping mind of the lower and the equally dull conscience in the upper class; must get them to see how the world stands to-day; must show them that they are on a volcano that when it bursts, will not only swallow up the uppermost, but its hot lava running

down the sides will engulf the lower, and all in a fiery ruin."

"But how, Herbert, how? Look at the interminable, inextricable difficulties before us. If the masses were intelligent enough and were willing to see and act, it would be different, but they will not even vote except on the old party lines; will not change *their* course but expect some one else to; some other man or men must bring this about. They join labor unions, and strike, and starve their families, because there is excitement in that; they are doing something desperate, hurting some one. They revenge themselves, get some of the people who are not starved, killed or maimed. They dearly love to get themselves strung up to the highest pitch of animal excitement, string some one up to a lamp post, or commit any crime to throw off the bad passions in themselves. They are *defending* their wives and children when they do that; 'protecting their wives' by allowing them to starve, while they fight.

"They annoy and injure their employers, cause both unnecessary suffering, and accomplish nothing, only agitation; they set the indifferent public to thinking, first, of what mischief they may do next, and then of the causes that wrought them up to that pitch. The people are compelled to think by their fears, and out of that will, in time, come the remedy.

"And now when they have done and suffered all they can in the way of harm, they go to work like hungry dogs as they are, and sink into their old apathy again, declaring that nothing can be done, and thinking that they must leave things as they are and be thankful for

bread to eat and clothes to wear. How can we rouse them, Herbert? I confess myself discouraged and at a loss; I cannot see the way."

"Well," said Herbert, "the only way I see is in co-operation. Just as long as labor creates the wealth of the world, and land (nature) the means through which labor evolves wealth (and this is God's free gift to all men equally, i. e., man's strength and ability to labor), and the soil the means by which labor is utilized, by just this right, as given equally to all, must we all do an equal share of the labor.

"Why am I, who work with my hands as a farmer or a miner, let us say, how am I, who, in one sense, do the most disagreeable and laborious (physical) work, to be expected to warm and feed you who do the intellectual work of the world; you who can sit at your (physical) ease amid the pleasant results of man's toil, in a beautiful home, amid art and luxury, and, sitting there, solve your problems (hard and knotty and onerous as they are, but more agreeable than my tasks), because you can be clean and comfortable? For what reason am I expected to furnish you these comforts and I have only the bare necessities of life?

"You will say, perhaps, as some contend, that through a long line of ancestry who have lived out the problem, i. e., gone through all these stages of life, you have inherited the right to ease and comfort since they bore the toil for you. Or, as the Theosophists say, you have been through all these phases of life in former incarnations, and have so earned your luxuries. I have not reached the luxury stage in my development, but if that

be true, and you have reached an advanced grade of intelligence, it is more than ever your duty to take care of my interests. Shall I leave the little child given to me as a trust, to take care of itself because I have arrived at the age of manhood and passed through the experiences he has got to meet; shall I let him starve because he has neither the knowledge or strength necessary to feed himself? Are not the intellectually poor and weak, the children, the charges or wards of their superiors? It should be so certainly.

"I need not confine myself to the needs or diet of the child, but it is surely my duty to see it properly clothed and fed. And so should the man of intellect and resources look after and provide for the classes that are unable to cope with the difficult circumstances of life, and make full provision for their comfort. It is not necessary I should put myself on their plane, or in their place, but must attend to it to the best of my ability, that they do not suffer, while I revel in luxury. They ought at least to have equal opportunities. Is it not so?

"Then on this ground alone, cooperation should prevail; and though perfect equality can never in my opinion prevail, because one portion of the world has the start of the other in the beginning and the race is necessarily unequal, yet to the late-comer should be secured the necessities and comforts of life. At least this will leave them free to advance as fast and far as is in their nature to do, thereby relieving the whole of us of a heavy incubus that hinders progress."

"I am glad to have this shown to me so plainly, Her-

bert. I see it so far, but how to bring about this so-much-to-be-desired cooperation is my problem."

"That is what puzzles us all. My plan is to educate the people to the needs of the hour. I also believe in the natural course of evolution. One cannot tell just the order on which it will come. The difficulty lies in the political situation, politics which control economics being run for party and not for principle, or the masses. The two existing parties must be counted out, broken up; nothing can be expected of them because they have run into ruts. A new party, a people's party, must be, nay, has been, organized. The 'one leg' principle has had its day. The body politic must stand squarely on its *two* feet and start off on a regular running race; the people *must be the people*; the sex line must be abolished. We cannot start a new party on an unjust basis and succeed. Equality must prevail.

"We want the peculiar characteristics of women in the field. It is of no use to quarrel and quibble over what the peculiar qualities of the female mind are, or dispute whether or not women are fitted for the fight that is to come. We want the *whole*: all there is, of whatever quality it may be. It is not known what lines women will develop into; they have had no chance. Let them have an equal chance with men, for in no other way can it be known what qualities they possess. We must take women as they are, accept them for what circumstances have made them, uphold and strengthen them where they are weak, and utilize thankfully their strength and power. At all events we cannot get on without them, and I question whether the 'Chariot of

State' will lose its equilibrium ever so little. Whatever we may expect, our women are much better prepared than we think. Their province is government, not only after they marry, but before. Every girl who arrives at an age of responsibility begins to study how to govern circumstances and make them yield the most they will, and because the girl is cramped and hampered on every side, she has to exercise all the more wit and wisdom to accomplish her desires. I think we may safely trust them in politics, if we can in our families where are the most sacred interests of our lives.

"As to the question whether they desire to accept equality (suffrage) and wish to take up the additional burden of government or not, it is of no moment in a consideration of Government. If they have thought about it at all, studied the situation, they invariably do desire the ballot; if they have not considered it, it is safe to conclude they will desire it when we have forced them to take it up, and if it is likely to make their burdens too heavy, we must help them out with some of those they now carry; at all events we must have them.

"With the female element introduced, undisciplined as they may be, we shall at least get out of the ruts, and not be likely to get into any new ones at once. It must give variety and scope to the public mind, and I believe much more of wisdom and far-sightedness in the moral as well as the intellectual line, because, as a rule, women are governed by intuition and see and act from a different view-point, and one in which we place much confidence in our private lives.

"Women favor humanitarian reforms always, when not mentally overshadowed by men, and that being the case, if we combine the wisdom and experience of men, with the ardor and intuitive gifts of women, it will be strange if we cannot find a way out of our social and economic difficulties. What you and I and every individual must do is to work for the new enlightenment because it embraces the woman movement as well as all other needed reforms that we worldings in our blindness and ignorance can perceive."

"Well," said Tom rising, "I see it clearer than I ever did before and am ready to do my part, but after all Fact seems to have us in her grip and one man looks pretty small in the whole plan; as we needs must move on in some line, it behooves us to exercise our best judgment to go in the right direction.

"Let us tone up our minds by drinking to the new movement a glass of old wine, after so long a look into the future," said Herbert.

"No thank you," said Tom, "not to-night, I'm too high strung. I'd better go home and dream out what I do not now see. 'La nuit porte conseil.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

Margaret.—Mrs. Stanley's Conversation with Her Husband.
—Disagreement.—Margaret and Gordon.

AND now while the abstruse problem is being dreamed out we will return to Margaret Stanley whom we left trying to recover her health in New York.

The opera was duly attended, and with the assistance of Mr. Gordon's interludes of explanation, proved a great delight. Margaret's natural love of music made her an apt listener and even had she been less beautiful and attractive, he would have taken the utmost pleasure in witnessing her quick perception and comprehension of the composer's idea.

He was more and more delighted with Margaret as their acquaintance progressed and he discovered new beauties in her character and realized that the delicate refinement of her face and form were but a reflection of mental qualities still more exquisite and delicate, yet strong, true and deep.

He saw that she possessed a wealth of intellect and of heart, and a staunch and unflinching courage that would never fail in any trial. He understood and admired her accordingly, and he so expressed himself in a conversation with Mrs. Stanley which took place one day when on an occasion of one of his calls Margaret was unable to see him and Mrs. Stanley received him.

After remarking upon the beauties of Margaret's character, Mrs. Stanley said, "And yet few men would desire Margaret for a wife."

"Do you realize how men hold to the old false idea of the 'clinging vine,' the 'playful kitten,' and the 'angel' in woman and how jealous they are of a woman of character like Margaret? I know I am speaking to a man of parts who will not only recognize the truth of a statement, but acknowledge its justice even if it is against himself or his kind.

"Probably you have not realized how man has been brought up through long ages to regard himself as the acme of humanity, to feel that he occupies the highest place the world can give, that he is the sovereign, the master of the universe, all of which is true if the sex line were not drawn.

"Man has in so classing himself thought only of brute force, physical power, and ignored the life energy that makes him a living, moving, forceful being. He has forgotten his origin. He has searched in the dissecting room and all possible and impossible places for the Soul, the Motive Power, of his life, for what has made him what he is, without avail; all his intellect and ingenuity have failed him. He could not find the Spirit by any material means and he had no other at his command because his was the material realm, he lacked intuition.

"Woman belongs to the Spiritual; here she is positive, this is her realm, that of the intuitive; how else could she be fit to bear the precious burden of life from the Spirit realm to the material? She is the passage-way;

she alone has the adaptive nature that can carry from God to man. She indeed, is the *arbor vitæ*, the tree of life.

"This idea has been shown in a crude way in the past by allusions to her angelhood. Poets have sung of it; men have worshipped the idea and gloried in it, and in their power of protection for her who embodied their highest ideal, and have grown strong and high in this role.

"The idea is poetry itself, but alas for the realization. Woman has borne the children, and many another burden, and the greatest of them all has been her confined and imprisoned intellect and general life. Instead of being the Angel, the governing power (for in the true conception how could angels submit to the rule of men?), literally the subordinate, taking what man in his judgment has seen fit to appropriate to her.

"'How has she been so held,' you ask?

"Not by physical force surely (though fear of that has had something to do with it), but by mental force, the power of man's *thought*.

"So to speak, the woman is, in a degree at least, out of her proper sphere. Her life must reach the highest and descend to the lowest which is the material plane, while man's comes through hers; he could not exist but for her.

"Is it the order of nature that the origin should be beneath that which is produced, subservient to it, controlled by it? Men have had two very distinct standards for woman, the angelic or poetical, which they

have talked much of, and the subservient which they have practiced.

“But women are not all alike; and some have always failed to be put down whatever may be the appearance on the surface. Woman’s life runs strong and deep and must sooner or later show itself; and between their angelhood and their womanhood they reach such an equilibrium that the mind of man has had to recognize its equal and fear his superior. He does not like it. His baser self claims the prerogative long established through precedent; he does not like that kind of an angel in his house, he fears her desire to rule him (judging her by himself) and because he feels her nearer proximity to the realm of Spirit and intellect, thinks she will be sure to be shown the way to it in spite of him; she must be kept down!

“But alas for the hope. She has learned her power and her ‘sphere’ and is reaching for it so fast and far that man stands aghast. Shall he have such in his own home and for the wife of his bosom? No indeed!

His wife must cling to and look up to him! He will struggle to the last.

“Of such as these advanced souls is Margaret and so I say few men would care to have her for a wife.”

Mr. Gordon had listened seriously and gravely, and replied with some reluctance. “The train of thought is new to me, my dear Mrs. Stanley, but I fear I shall be obliged to acknowledge its truth. I am sure, however, such reasons would never weigh with me. On the contrary, a woman of strength and character would be my choice. I shall want true companionship, and

never grudge my wife, if such a blessing ever comes to me, all the privileges of her Soul-born sphere. Alas! How little we know ourselves! John Stuart Mill says, 'A man hates an equal at his own fireside.' It may be true."

But to return to Margaret. She also had recognized in Mr. Gordon a man of superiority. She had never met her equal before, a man who could teach and be willing to be taught, to see things out of her eyes as she did out of his, who would listen to her patiently and respect her opinion as he expected her to respect his, and with whom she could feel such companionship as had never fallen to her lot before; and as time passed and they knew each other better, they congratulated themselves that their companionship was no sickly sentimentalism, but a shoulder to shoulder, equally-balanced friendship, on a footing rarely attained by man and woman and as lasting as the hills. They stood soul to soul.

Margaret as she learned more and more of the world, had taken a great distaste for marriage. She could not make up her mind to tie herself irrevocably to any man, for she saw plainly that if she were yoked to an angel the fact in itself of being yoked would produce conditions of restraint that would kill her love and cause her great unhappiness; because of our social laws which she could see no way to improve upon she had resolved to live her life alone and forego home and family pleasures rather than put herself in a position she felt would soon become irksome to her. She believed in marriage for others but not for herself, and such a friendship as this

was peculiarly pleasing to her. She had read John Stuart Mill's "Subjection of Women."

As time passed, without realizing it, they were both making rapid strides in mental growth.

Mr. Gordon had been educated in a German University and had had years of travel; he had seen nearly all countries and being naturally a student with a sharply analytical mind, had looked into most of the general lines of knowledge and considered himself—as he was—"au fait" in most of them.

Margaret's learning had come from her inner nature, whose intuitive depths were inexhaustible, limited only by the power of her consciousness to grasp and interpret them.

In such highly organized minds this consciousness comes suddenly in response to the needs of the hour. Necessity for knowledge of any kind was the key that unlocked the closed doors of these inner chambers and disclosed to her outer sense whatever she desired to know, for all minds are at one with the Great Unseen (the reservoir of knowledge) in a greater or less degree, and only the turning of the spigot of necessity is necessary for our enlightenment, unless, as is mostly the case, the consciousness is so filled with the acquirements of the material life that opinions and prejudices thus gained hinder and shut out the influx. Like a clear running stream, with a dam built across it that causes it to back water and then to fall with a commotion that changes it entirely from what its nature provided, it still runs on, but not in its natural way.

Margaret's passive existence up to the time of Mr.

Langley's accident had left her intuition clear for her use in her new and varied life and the lessons it contained for her; though if we could only understand that life on earth is in reality only a school for the education of the Soul, a sequence which nothing could break, it would be much easier and spare us sufferings innumerable.

The truly noble soul of Mr. Gordon was weighted instead of exalted, by his education, his years of contact with the world and his studies of men and their methods. He had no real knowledge of himself or of anything but his surface life. He had his ideals of what man should be and thought he lived up to them pretty well, but they were sometimes cramped and stunted and made his life seem warped and irregular to others.

He spent much time and pains, society man though he was, teaching advanced theories of benefit to mankind and thought he was sacrificing himself on the altar of a good cause—as he was—but he did not look deep enough into his own nature to see that his motive was not wholly unselfish, and that mental exhilaration was a large factor; that to overcome by his well founded arguments the opinions and prejudices of a person's whole development thus far, was an exhilarating pleasure greater than the effort to study up his subject had been laborious, or than of having turned the thought of the listener in a direction likely to benefit him and the world at large by adding another mind to the side of right and against error. In doing this he was no different from the rest of mankind and it

was perfectly legitimate and right. The point is, that he did not see the effect upon himself, taking more credit for unselfishness than belonged to him, thereby deceiving himself about himself, and since to know one's self is to know all others, he was deceived in every one and in his estimate of human nature and so he was going through the world blindly. "Know thyself" contains all wisdom. To understand the nature of your friend, one must dig up and analyze his own characteristics, face them and "put himself in his place" and from these premises form his judgment; then you may be said to have knowledge. It is much easier to bury our faults and lay the effect of them upon some one else and leave our world to go wrong because we stand on a wrong basis. Mr. Gordon recognized the good he did, but covered up his faults, or rather, failed to recognize them and thought the effects of them must needs lie at some other door.

If things went wrong with Margaret she dove deep in her own nature, rooted out the cause, brought it to light, looked it over and as far as she was able stamped it out of existence.

The effect of this upon her mind was to make her less lenient to others who did not do this. To her it brought great power and capabilities, and she could not understand that others had not the same power of self-command, and because she desired to know her faults in order to overcome them, she was merciless in pointing out to her friends defects of character which in herself she would have resolutely uprooted, and her surprise was great that they not only seemed hurt, and

paid no attention to them, but rather were offended with her.

Life is made up of small things. Margaret knew herself better than most people, but did not fully realize that she might safely take her own experience as a criterion by which to judge others, and having discovered so many faults in her own nature it lessened her self esteem and she let her conscience lash her unreasonably, making her self-distrustful and unhappy. She had not reached her equilibrium. Unconsciously, however, she conveyed the idea to others because of her vigorous and self-contained ways, that she estimated herself too highly, when the fact was quite the contrary and she was lashing herself for faults she did not possess.

Naturally, if any "uneven places" came up between her and Mr. Gordon she was inclined to take the blame upon herself and he was very willing she should. The result is easily foreseen. Their path grew more and more uneven. She in her womanly way smoothed matters over and took the blame upon herself whether it belonged to her or not, for peace's sake, and he permitted it without protest and neither saw their mistake.

One bright day in the early spring Mr. Gordon proposed a drive in the Park and Margaret assented with a lively sense of satisfaction. She was just in the mood for it.

The air was cool and balmy, the sky was blue, the clouds fleecy and soft, all nature was preparing to spring into life and activity, and swelling with rapture at the prospect of release from its winter captivity. The

horses caught the inspiration of the day and bowled along at a pace exhilarating and thoroughly inspiring.

"How delightful!" exclaimed Margaret. "What a perfect day! Nature has done her best for us."

"Yes," said her companion, "What a pity all the rest of the world cannot enjoy it as well as we."

"True, indeed! I sometimes feel quite guilty taking so much comfort when I think of the millions living in squalor and misery without the necessities of life even. But then I think my refusing the enjoyments offered me would not help these others. How gladly would I forego the pleasure if it would make up to the lives of the wretched any measure of comfort; but I find no one of us can bear another's burden; each soul must have the experience it needs. I feel so utterly helpless when I think of it, there seems no way out into the light for them, looking from the material plane. Individual effort can do nothing."

"No, it is all wrong; it is the system; the whole plan must be changed and that is a matter of time, of growth and education. When the people realize the injustice of the present situation and desire a more equitable adjustment it will come. The present system of competition is all wrong; we want fraternal cooperation instead of fraternal competition."

"Yes, I see, but so many think competition desirable because there will be no incentive if that is taken away. They say man must have this incentive to labor."

"Oh, now don't *you* talk that way. I have shown you over and over it is not true. I'm so tired of hear-

ing such nonsense talked; every one you meet says that the first thing. I expect better things of you."

"Yes, but—"

"Oh, I know what you are going to say, but after we have talked it over again and again you ought to know better. Do you think a man must always be forced in order to follow the bent of his own mind? What would life be without employment? Do you think I should sit still like an oyster and fold my hands because I had bread and meat and the other necessities of life? That would not satisfy the demands of my nature for activity, the desire to do something, I should always have my ideals to carry out."

"Yes, I know, but—"

"There you go with you 'buts' again. I do not see how I can make it any plainer; if you don't understand now you never will."

"If you remember," she finally succeeded in saying, "I said *I* understand, but people, other people, so many, think competition necessary, do you not remember? You misunderstood me. You did not give me a chance to explain, that was all. Never mind, it is so easy to misunderstand. I presume I did not state it plainly. We will say no more about it, the day is much too pleasant to get angry in. It reminds me it is nearly time to put behind me the pleasures of city life and seek my native hills. I must go home soon."

"Now you have brought up another disagreeable subject. You know I can't bear to think of your going home. I cannot do without you. There is little enough that is pleasant in life without being reminded that

one's best friend is going to leave him. I believe you want to go just to annoy me because you know how much I want you to stay. You know no one can take your place to me but you do not care because you are going home to your friends. I am nowhere."

"Oh yes, you are. I am ashamed to say I am so ungrateful as not to wish to go, when they have all been denying themselves so much to let me stay here and get quite strong and well. I am afraid I ought to have gone before and should but for the pain of leaving you. I shall miss everything, but you most of all. I never had such a companion before. Then, you must remember, I shall have no companionship that is congenial with my present ideas of things, and can only find my pleasure in giving to others what has been so freely given to me."

"Oh yes, that's just like you women. You can take up anything and go along with it and be satisfied. It's no hardship for you, but what can a man do who has fixed habits and does not like to change his friends? To find one that pleases him is not so easy. It is too disagreeable to think of. You might let a man enjoy himself the little time he has left and not bring up so disagreeable a topic to put him out of sorts."

"I am sorry I spoke of it. I did not think it disagreeable as long as it must be met. I am sure you seem to me to have much the best of it, for you have everything congenial when I must go to work at my old irksome duties again. I am really sorry it does not look very pleasant to me."

"Well, I suppose it does not, but you women always

take things so easy. It is no trouble to you to do what you do not like."

"I cannot see why you should say that," said Margaret who was by this time having hard work to keep her temper. "We have feeling the same as men, and are made of flesh and blood, and like what we like and dislike what we dislike."

"Oh now, you are vexed," he said. "Nothing ever goes quite right with you lately."

"I think I'll keep still awhile then," she replied, "and let you commune with Nature."

Silence reigned for a time and then as they drove to the door she said, "Pardon me, perhaps I was impatient. I did not intend to spoil your drive." This was what she thought he should have said and she made this opportunity for him to respond kindly and make the leave-taking pleasant, but he replied out of his supreme blindness and selfishness,

"Oh, never mind, I am sure you did not intend to be disagreeable," then lifting his hat, he drove away.

Scenes like this grew more frequent, Margaret feeling as in this case a deep sense of injustice. She had not been the one to "do the disagreeable," and his conduct showed an amount of egotism and want of generosity that shocked a nature where justice reigned supreme. It rankled more and more in her mind, although she treated him with as much sweetness of manner as formerly. She could not forget it and she felt that there might be a point of forbearance beyond which she could not go. She was very positive when once aroused and once her sense of justice was trampled upon

too far, she knew she would not bear it and she studied to put off the fatal day, hoping she might get away without a serious break, for now her whole happiness seemed to center in him, and to go home feeling she had lost him as well as everything that made life seem pleasant to her, was more than she could bear.

But the storm fell one day with the fury of a cyclone. Some luckless word of hers threw him into such a passion, causing him to so forget himself, she felt her dignity had been trampled upon too far, and thereon must be a final separation.

She dismissed him from her presence with dignity and decision, and closed that chapter of her life with less regret than she could have supposed possible. She had been very much tried.

It was on the eve of her departure and she summoned all her fortitude for she grieved to leave her kind aunt and uncle lonely again, knowing how they would miss her.

Once settled in the train, however, the farewells over and nothing to sustain her courage, the pall settled over her. She was not given to weeping, tears rarely came to her, but the blackness of darkness was over her soul, not a ray of light penetrated the gloom, and she wished she had the courage to jump from the train and be dashed to pieces upon the rocks; but she was not cowardly enough for that. She knew this trial had a meaning for her and she struggled bravely to rise above the gloom and be able to meet her friends with composure and hide from every eye her grief. Here we will leave her to pursue her lonely journey.

To Mr. Gordon the separation was simply maddening. He knew the fault was his, and his eyes were opened to all he had lost, though he could not see how it had come. His restlessness and anger at he knew not what, were something fearful. He felt too irritated to talk to anyone, and yet he could not bear to be alone. He fulfilled his duties through the day as best he could, but when his mind was released at night he walked and walked himself into utter weariness, and was assisted to bed by his valet in a state of such physical fatigue he could but sleep, though fitfully and with distressing dreams of Margaret, going over and over in his sleep the gist of his thought during the day. He tried to seek companionship, but all women failed to inspire him with interest and men only increased his irritation.

He hungered for Margaret. One moment he thought he would take a train for her home at once, and compel her to forgive him, but he dared not, and was, moreover, much too proud to acknowledge that he was wrong. The next moment he was ready to curse her for resenting words she ought to know he did not mean, and said to himself time and time again that he had supposed she was the one woman that could understand a man, and had sense enough to know that he did not mean any offense to her, but was irritated and just let out his feelings without thinking she would be offended. She knew he loved her better than anyone else in the world.

It is a singular fact that men who have the instincts of gentlemen, who are polished and cultured, and have noble traits of character, will (as it were) seize upon the

woman they love and mentally make her so one with himself, he includes her in the abuse he puts upon himself from lack of consideration and self-restraint and loses sight of the fact that it is not possible for another person to injure him so much as he hurts himself by harboring and "acting out" feelings of irritation and anger.

Mr. Gordon had indulged himself in this so long that his whole nature and mental vision was warped and he did not realize he was abusing Margaret as well as himself, because he held her so much one with himself.

Occultists explain this by saying the two are twin halves of one Soul, getting their experience through differentiation into sex life, and the man being more positive on the earth plane, is the aggressor.

We will now leave our hero to fight it out alone with the God of his own nature.

CHAPTER IX.

Corinne's Reception.—What Is Love?—Corinne's Happiness.
—Tom's Mistake.—Margaret at Home.

PRETTY Corinne was flitting about in her garden from flower to flower plucking here and there the choicest to fill her basket, for she had invited friends for the evening, and Tom was to be there. Her (to her) grave brother, too, was to be present, and she wished everything to be faultless in his eyes: so she was arranging with her own hands the flowers that were to fill the rooms with their fragrance, and weaving in her thoughts as pretty a romance as ever came from the pen of our ablest writers. She intended her romance to blossom into a reality. Its hero was to be Tom and she was to be the heroine for she had discovered she loved Tom, and as she studied him from day to day, she felt sure he loved no other, and he was so familiar and kind she built her hopes high and longed for the time when he should tell her of the love he must feel for her. She knew nothing of curly haired Rena up in the hills and did not dream she had a rival. Pretty, spoiled Corinne: the great heart of Tom does indeed seem big enough for two, but how shall he be divided?

He thought of Corinne only as the petted daughter of his employer and the sister of his best friend. His familiarity in the family kept him near her a good deal

and he delighted to make her happy as he did every one whom he knew. He had no other thought with regard to her. He would have shielded her from harm as if she was his own sister even at the risk of his life. She was pleasant, but impulsive and imperious, and exacted much of him that he readily gave: in fact he quite enjoyed being put upon and made errand boy, but he did not dream of any tie nearer than the one that now existed between them.

The evening came as all much-longed-for evenings do, and dark eyed Corinne was radiant in a gold colored India silk with just a touch of lace to give it piquancy and relieve the sheen; a bunch of white rosebuds in her corsage and a dear love of a one with its setting of green leaves in her hair. She was very beautiful and she knew it, and thought Tom could not fail to succumb to so much loveliness. She resolved to put him into such a position he could not well avoid coming to the point.

Corinne inherited from her French mother, a wily and unscrupulous nature, and did not hesitate to bring about what she so much desired, by a well laid little plan.

Her guests were scattered about the house and grounds. Those who desired were dancing, others strolling among the shrubbery, sitting in lovers' corners on the broad piazza, or eating ices in the brilliantly lighted dining-room.

Corinne who had been dancing, had dismissed her partner when she saw Tom approaching and had im-

periously ordered him to bring her an ice and stay with her while she ate it. She had seated herself on a garden seat in a secluded corner and waited, tapping her tiny foot upon the floor with impatience and anxiety: she felt that now was the time to bring Tom to terms. Her heart fluttered tumultuously lest she might fail, for how could she be sure he loved her. He was so different from other men, one could not calculate on him with any certainty.

The cream was brought, and, seated very close together (for she had purposely chosen a narrow seat) they ate it and chatted on indifferent subjects.

"Do you know Helen Simpson is engaged to Charles Ward?" asked Corinne. "No, indeed! He is to be congratulated, is he not?" said Tom.

"Oh yes, I suppose so. Tom, what is love like? Did you ever love any one?" And the beautiful girl looked artlessly up into Tom's face leaning slightly towards him as he sat with his arm thrown carelessly across the back of the seat.

"What is love," he said, ignoring her last question. "Well now I am afraid you ask me too much. How should I know?"

"But you must have an idea. What do you think it is?"

"Perhaps I never thought much about it."

"Oh yes you have, I am sure. Everyone does. Do you think one person can love another dearly and not be aware of it until something startling comes to wake him up to it?"

"Yes, I suppose that might be. We read of such cases in books, and I suppose most books are taken from real life."

"Well, do tell me what your idea of love is. I want to know how you would feel if you loved any one. Come now, I will have it. I command you, and you must obey."

"If I must, then, I must," said Tom. His mind suddenly flooded with the image of Rena. "If I loved, I should be so filled and pervaded with the life of a woman, I should not be able to separate her from myself. She would have grown with me, kept her mind parallel to mine, had the same thoughts and feelings from her feminine standpoint that I had, if we were in separate corners of the globe, or if we had always lived near each other.

"She would have been a part of my life, perhaps, long before we met, and if she were near I should have measured and timed myself by her growth. In my inner life, I should not know whether it were she or I who was thinking. I should have to question in which mind a thought originated, I should feel myself so in unison with her. Perhaps I should attribute all my faults to her and her virtues to myself. I should feel a dim rapture when in her presence or when my thought was directed to her. I should thrill through and through all my being at the touch of her hand." (He did not notice that a little hand crept silently into his, and that the breath of his companion came quick and short, for he was on the hill with Rena.) "Her head upon my shoulder would give me ecstasy." (The head

slid to his shoulder.) "And with my arms about her it would be all the heaven I desire." Carried away with his vision, Tom clasped his fair companion in a close embrace. Corinne was enchanted, and folded her arms about his neck with an "Oh Tom!" and pressed her warm lips to his, happy beyond expression at her easy conquest, for she really believed she was the object of Tom's rhapsody.

The pressure of her lips, the ecstatic expression of her face awoke him to present life. In an instant he saw what he had done. He was paralyzed. He could no more move than the "rock of ages." Merciful God! what had he done? Corinne, satisfied and happy, kissed and petted him to her heart's content, and let overflow the full measure of her joy; and he sat with his arms clasped about her, dumb, taking in the situation, realizing her love for him and his mistake, and knowing, while a leaden weight settled over him and filled the air and clouded the sky, that he could not undeceive her, thinking he would be a coward and craven to enlighten her now. Could he break her heart, she, the sister of his friend, the daughter of a man who had done so much for him?

But Rena! what of her? She whom he had loved ever since he could remember and who he well knew loved him, though no words of love ever passed between them. God forgive him. He could not stay. He must get away to think. Summoning all his strength and courage he controlled himself enough to make proper excuses and tore himself away.

In abject misery he paced the streets all night long.

No solution came. He could see but the one way. But, his duty to Rena? Had he a right to wreck her life?—that life dearer to him than his own; that which was his own, in fact. What would she think! He had only to put himself in her place and ask himself. He knew she would tell him he was bound in honor, not to Corinne alone but to the family who had been most generous and kind, and who he knew would be more than gratified to have him one of them. Could he do it? Could he dissemble? Could he live a lie? Could he act a part all his life? Could he so school himself that he would not make Corinne more unhappy than to tell her now?

He thought of her as he had never thought before. He tried to analyze her character. He threw the glamour of inexperience over her and remembered her sweetness when not “crossed” and her kittenish, child-like, undeveloped mind and hoped much for her in the future.

It seems not so difficult to a young man to play the lover to a pretty young girl whom he respects, even though he does not adore her, and Tom found less unhappiness in the situation than he had thought possible. Her happiness reflected upon his mind and mirrored it in his life. In his thought he put the day of marriage far off. Corinne was young and he not settled in life. She was content, and he hoped for some happy change while he enjoyed the “good the gods gave him,” man fashion.

His letters to Rena took a friendly tone and since no word of love had passed between them she did not notice

any change, and so time which never stops, ran on, the days grew into weeks and months, and life abode with them still.

Margaret's arrival was a cause of much joy in the Hill farmhouse. They were so pleased and proud to have such a fine lady (as they called her) at home again. It was Margaret, but not the old Margaret, the same and yet how changed. She went away a tired, worn out farmer's daughter, she returned a glorious woman, cultured and refined; but that was not all the change; a subtle something they could not understand was there. Much was gained, but something was lost; they could not define it. She was the same in all her loving, tender, helpful ways, but her former buoyancy had gone, and they missed it. So much of her still remained, however, they set it down to city life and tried to forget it.

She was not allowed to take up her share of the work until she got "wonted" as her mother said. She had been shut up in the city so long she must have time to get acquainted with the hills again, and Rena said Madge might take Bounce and roam, she was the elder sister now.

Margaret was very glad to do this for awhile. Her heart was sore, for the pain of parting with her friends was greatly enhanced by her break with Mr. Gordon and she wanted to think it all out.

She knew she had not been wrong, and that nothing more or less than what she did would have answered the requirements of the case. If it were not so, an occasional wrong on her part might have been over-

looked, since she had so often had to forgive him. She knew him to be a noble man and a gentleman, courteous to ladies always; why then should he treat her in such a manner. No solution came, and the everlasting question was always revolving in her mind until she finally concluded that her country breeding had given him a license he did not dare take with the city bred ladies. She had not heard Tom's idea of love, men's love, and she did not know that a man holds a woman he loves so much his own as to treat her as brusquely as he would himself. Nothing else suggested itself to her,—what could she think? The consequence was, her respect for him went down to zero. She could not reconcile it with what she knew of him. She was grievously disappointed, his quarrelsomeness seemed so childish and undignified, selfish and unjust. Alas! here was her "Grand Man," her ideal, trailing in the dust like any common place mortal. Her faith in the nobility of man was shattered.

As yet she could not see beneath the surface, her mind was so sore. She only looked for something to deaden the pain. She was astonished that this love had taken such a hold upon her, she could not escape it for an hour even. She was dismayed. She was brave, however, and all her sturdy New England training stood by her in this crisis. Her life in the home was taken up as of old, though Rena contested with her the rights, and they shared the burdens together, leaving the dear mother more leisure and comfort.

Yet in spite of all her philosophy her mental agony was great. She could not ignore the fine points in Mr.

Gordon's character, and she could not understand the contradictions and incongruities; he was to her an anomaly. Sometimes a stream of tenderness came over her, she blamed herself for minding his vagaries, and longed for him unutterably; she could recall only the happy hours, and felt it bitterly hard to be separated from him; but really that was nothing, if she could only have believed in him.

Alas, alas! how difficult is life.

Mr. Gordon was all this time in a state bordering on insanity. His own anger and self-reproach made him miserable, and the fluctuations of Margaret's mind as they reached him, made him more miserable or more comfortable as the case might be. His own thoughts as they flew back to her, established a mental telegraph with which time and space cannot interfere. His restlessness and misery were complete. Neither he nor she understood that thought so completely annihilated time and space, and both believed they were living in thoughts generated in their own minds independent of each other.

Rena was looking forward with impatience to the time when Tom would come home again, and planning many a little, pleasant trip with him, among which was one to explore the mountain for the lovers' cave she had been told of, but had never found; and quite unconsciously she had built her little romance upon the trip and the suggestive lover's story.

She revelled in Tom's letters which were scrupulously friendly (without her noticing it) and very entertaining, for writing to her was his delight, and he longed

to make amends to her in some small measure for what she would deem his treachery.

Much as he wished to see her, he dared not trust himself, and hoped against hope that something might happen to release him from his unpleasant predicament.

Corinne, alone was happy; she tyrannized over Tom, and loved and petted him and looked up to him in a manner most satisfactory to the male mind, and only for Rena he would have been comfortably happy.

But Rena was there; a constant reproach to him; his love, his very life, and his torment, and at times he felt he could not bear it.

Meantime the work of the outward world went on just the same and no one saw the heartaches and miseries under the quiet exterior.

CHAPTER X.

Herbert Coming Home at Night.—Woman's Shrieks.—
Ruffians.—Rescue.—Removed to Hospital.—Langley
"Spotted."—Assault.—Arrest.—Hospital.

HERBERT LANGLEY pursued the even tenor of his way undisturbed by the fluctuations of life, being engrossed in business and philanthropic work. His father leaned upon him and left things to his judgment more and more, and no particular thought of love or extraordinary friendship had so far disturbed him. His spare moments were occupied in writing a book upon economics that absorbed him and kept him from thoughts and experiences that come to most men of his age. His studies were constant in one direction, and every experience in his daily life or that of those around him was made to play its part in the one great subject that occupied his mind.

One cold rainy evening as he was returning from a public meeting in the lower quarters of the city, his steps were arrested by a scream from a tenement house near by.

He stopped to listen, but all was still. He was about to pass on when a second shriek rang out on the air and he started in search of the voice.

He threw open the door of the house and hurriedly ascended the stairs for the noises proceeded from an

upper room. On the second landing he found a child crouching in terror, who, upon seeing him cried, "Oh, sir, they will kill her! They will kill her, do help her! In there, in there!" He burst open the door to find two men in a desperate struggle with a woman, who frail and delicate as she was, seemed possessed of the strength of a giant. Instantly he drew a pistol which he always carried for emergencies, and covering the men with it, commanded them to leave the woman alone, and demanded to know what they were about.

Seeing they were powerless before so determined an adversary, they sullenly stood aside, having dropped the woman upon the floor where she lay as one dead. Langley called for the child to get a policeman, never moving his eyes or his pistol from the wretches.

They did not stir, for the determined look of the man made them sure he would shoot if they moved. Besides they knew him, as most of the people in that quarter did, and his courage and severity to wrongdoers was well understood. The men knew also that their chances of safety were much better in submission than in effort to escape.

Soon the police were there and the pistol was no longer needed. The prostrate woman was taken up and laid upon the bed and restoratives applied. The child, a girl of twelve years, was most efficient now, and from her they gathered their story.

Her mother had been brought up in affluence, but had married contrary to the wishes of her father.

(Alas! how many lives are wrecked by the arrogance, self-will and injustice of fathers and relatives, who for

some foolish ambition or pride wreck the lives of those they should protect. Kindly advice and suggestion are always acceptable, but coercion is not only sure to fail, but it reacts upon those who tyrannize. Individual rights are sacred, and if persons elect to do what will make them unhappy in the future, the only way is to accord them their right to do this, for through our mistakes and suffering comes the development that lifts us up higher. Coercion in any line always causes misery, and one can do no more than be miserable from his own mistakes. Then let us consider individual rights to make mistakes even, as sacred.) Despite their grief at the continued opposition of the father, things went well with the young couple until the husband sickened, and after a long illness that exhausted all their resources, died and left them alone in want and misery. The unfortunate woman had managed to keep soul and body together by sewing, cleaning, and any odd jobs she could find, and had kept the little Flora at school. They had been obliged to take a cheap room in this neighborhood, which was very obnoxious to her refined tastes, and they had kept themselves secluded, associating with no one unless obliged to, and then as little as possible.

This exclusiveness had incensed the neighbors, who as is proverbial with this class, felt looked down upon and resented it in many ways exceedingly disagreeable, but which were passed by in silence. The women in the house had become so incensed at the apparent insensibility to the attempts to annoy her they could talk of little else, and the men of the neighborhood took it

up, and these two ruffians had determined to wreak their will and humble her pride. In her absence they had tampered with the lock on the door, and when she had, as she supposed, securely locked herself in her room and gone to sleep, they entered and waking her roughly attempted to accomplish their purpose. This caused the first scream Langley heard, and the second was from the child when they dragged her to the floor. Flora ran to the landing in search of help, but the house was suspiciously still and no one came till she heard Langley's step on the stair.

The stupor into which the woman was thrown proved obstinate. A policeman hastily summoned a doctor, who having learned the facts said she must be removed to the hospital at once as the shock had been so great it would not do for her to regain consciousness in that room where the assault would be brought to her mind again and cause a relapse that would probably prove fatal. The ambulance was hastily summoned and with the weeping child she was taken away at once, leaving her few effects to be looked after by the police.

Long and earnest were the attempts to restore her, but for days she lingered unconscious until hope was almost abandoned. The seventh day, however, she opened her eyes in which shone the light of reason and recognized her child, who was beside herself with joy, and then relapsed into unconsciousness again, remaining in this condition for days. The little Flora was inconsolable; she had grown so wan and weak, steadily refusing to leave her mother's side, that it was deemed necessary to remove her, and Langley who

had been a frequent visitor at the hospital, undertook the difficult task of persuading her to go home with him that her grief might not retard her mother's recovery. This he succeeded in doing after repeated efforts, and his mother and sister did all in their power to make the little waif feel at home and comfortable. She was allowed to be with her mother a few minutes each day. And so the case lingered until one day three weeks from the time of the assault the patient again regained consciousness, and though much emaciated and very weak, she made slow but steady progress. Long days and weeks passed before she was convalescent. Then came the question where she should go. The Langley family had become much attached to the little Flora who was a bright, affectionate child, and Corinne suggested that as the preparations for her marriage came on a seamstress would be needed and Mrs. Burton had better come there and do the sewing until some other position was made for her. This proposal was made to Mrs. Burton and joyfully accepted.

Young Langley was "spotted" by the man whose plans he had frustrated and one night as he was going home from the house of a sick man whom he had befriended, a stealthy step came up from behind him, and when he came to a dark place a heavy blow fell upon his head, and he dropped to the pavement insensible. An accomplice of the ruffian who struck the blow came up, and they dragged the unconscious man to a cellar close by, where they left him for dead, taking everything about him they could safely carry.

"I guess that dom bloke is done fur," said one of the

ruffians to the other. "He won't put his mug in our picnic agin' in a hurry, dom him. Sarved him right by Gawd, he's no biz monkeyin' with a buzzsaw and don't you fergit it. He'll find, blarst him, he'd better mind his own biz and not be comin' it over us with his little pop; when us fellers mind to take down a dom'd upstart of a wench thet's bin settin' the hull block a bilin' with her highfalutin' we most gin'r'ly git thar'n don't mind to be meddled with. She's as poor as any on us and no better'n my old 'un thet she wouldn't wipe her shoes on. I wish I'd smashed her dom'd head before the Jim Dandy got thar, only thet would er spilt our fun; he's got his settlin' now anyhow, he won't do no more interferin' I guess. We're the 'hummin' candy,' hey Bill?"

"Say Bob," said Bill, "do you spoze he's dead? If he is we'd better light out'en here 'er the cops 'll be after us. They'd nab us coz they knows we had a grudge agin him."

"Thet's so, Bill, we must light out en here, sure nuf. Ther cums a cop now," and they rushed down a side street out of sight.

Their movements had been watched by a sharp pair of eyes though in a small head, for a forlorn waif of a boy, taking his night's rest—if rest it could be called—in an old box that in daylight served as a table for an apple woman, and as his sleeping room nights, heard what the men were talking about as they had unconsciously halted close by his nest, and peeping through a crack he saw and recognized the men. In an instant he was out of his box beckoning to the policeman and

darting down the alley his bare feet making no noise, he saw the pair as they entered a house which they went through, came out again at the rear and climbed a fence which happened to be high enough to take a little time, and just as the lad had pointed the way the policemen unseen came up and caught both men by the legs while they were in such a position that neither could see what held them, or move one way or the other.

It was naturally dark where the policeman and boy stood, but the men were shown in bold relief by a gas light near, and caught the eye of another "servant of the people" on the other street, who noticing something peculiar, appeared on the scene in time to give aid. Both the men were securely bound and then the officers proceeded to find what was wrong.

The boy related what he had heard, and after the men were put in a safe place the officers proceeded to look for the unfortunate man who had suffered at their hands. Led by the boy they found him with little trouble, but to all appearance he was dead.

Lifting him carefully they took him to the sidewalk, and after a little while a slight fluttering of the pulse was perceptible; a few drops of brandy were administered and he rallied a little. He was carefully lifted into the hastily summoned ambulance and taken to the nearest hospital where he was speedily restored to consciousness, though he was very feeble and his condition precarious.

It was now broad daylight and a messenger was dispatched to Tom who in an agony of apprehension hast-

ened to the hospital. He was not allowed to see his friend, but learned all he could and taking the first carriage he could find, drove rapidly to the house of Mr. Langley to communicate the sad tidings to his family.

Great was the consternation of the young man's friends. The physician's orders were strict that only Mr. Langley should be allowed to come to the hospital as the patient's condition was so critical. This left the poor women at home in a state of anxiety easier imagined than described.

Mrs. Burton was of all the most beside herself, for she knew very well that this misfortune was the result of her gallant rescue and she was agonized at the thought of bringing such trouble to her generous friends, but nothing could be done. She could only pray to a merciful God to restore life and health to her benefactor.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley's Conversation.—Thought Transference.—Hypnotism.—Woman.—Margaret.

THE pleasant family room of the Stanleys was alight with a bright grate fire, gas jets, and the happy and eager face of Mrs. Stanley as she sat with her easy chair drawn close to her husband's for their evening *tete-a-tete*. It was their invariable custom to take this hour for a restful chat, and any topic of interest that had come to them through the day was discussed "*ad libitum*." Today Mrs. Stanley had fallen in with friends who talked of the all-absorbing subject of the present day, thought transference, or hypnotism, and she wished to relate the substance of what she had heard to her husband.

"What have you got hold of now, my dear? You women are digging away at abstruse problems, while we men are so immersed in business cares, we have no time for study. I, for one, should be quite an *ignoramus* if you did not hunt up the new things to tell me."

"No danger of that, dear, but is not that what we are for, to supply you men with what you need, whether it be breakfasts, or instruction? If all men looked at it as you do, it would be a different and much pleasanter world, for women at least.

"If once this subject could be grasped by men, that is, if men would lay aside their prejudices and accept our help where they need it most, what a difference it would make. The trouble is they have made a 'sphere' for woman. Her 'sphere' is where she can be the most useful, I think. And as there is no superiority in sex, *each being the half of one whole*, one just as important as the other, and both in search of knowledge, of a development that must come through the experiences and sufferings of earth life, why create a 'sphere' for either? But I have wandered far away from my subject."

"It is an instructive and pleasant side issue for me, I would like to hear more about it."

"Some other time, dear, I wish to tell you this first, about 'thought transference' or 'hypnotism.' "

"Well, I am ready to listen, for all your subjects are very absorbing and full of interest for me and very restful. If the 'ordinary man' only knew what rest and recuperation came from giving himself up to an hour's intelligent conversation with his wife, none of them would forego it."

"But, George, men are so jealous of us, they will not allow that they *can* be taught by a woman!"

"I suppose that is true, but if you will be patient with us we shall come to it after a while."

"There is something to be thankful for, dearie, in being sure of one that has already arrived at that goal, as I am. Why, George, one of the broadest and most intelligent men I know, still insists upon the Superiority of man over woman."

"Well, pity him, and let him go; he'll learn better if he is really an intelligent man. Now about the 'thought transference.' I am all eagerness. Sometimes I have a few minutes' leisure during business distractions and my mind is sure to run away to some of your new theories, and it freshens me wonderfully."

"How glad I am you told me, it makes me so happy. It really takes very little to make a woman happy, did you know it?"

"Yes, I can bear witness to that."

"Well, dear, I think none of us realize how All Mind is One,' that we all *think* out of an atmosphere as well as breathe out of one. Now as that is true, we see that you do not have your portion of atmosphere and I mine, but we can roam through space (as it were) and take any of the different elements of which the atmosphere is composed that is needful to us, and rob no one, for there's enough for all. So in mind; all mind is alike except in degree of development, and like two drops of water, if put into juxtaposition, they will run together and become one; as, just now, *we* are of one mind since our thoughts are concentrated on one subject, because I am imparting something to you that you wish to know. Mind is the same, only I am changing its quality by introducing another element of knowledge.

"Now if I can add to, I can, of course, subtract from what you call your mind; I can take from it a positive quality and add a negative one if I wish to gain some selfish end by it; I can do this consciously, that is with a purpose, or unconsciously, from an unrealized

desire. When I do either of these I hypnotise you, overpower you, make you subservient to my wishes."

"Now, wait, my dear, that is so stupendously simple, it takes my breath. This much-vaunted hypnotism—only that! And yet how far-reaching and comprehensive it is; its ramifications are endless. I see it in business life, in the family, in the nation, and the world over, for that matter.

"Yes, it certainly is awe-inspiring, and the difficulty is how to use this power to the world's advantage."

"But you must have some practical ideas about it."

"Oh, yes, but not many; the foundation is right-thinking and unselfishness. But let us see something of how it is used today. Man is, in the universal plan of life upon the earth plane, the positive element, because the plane of materiality is masculine; he is in closer rapport with the elements of earth life and more open to its magnetic currents. Woman is negative to earth, but positive to spirit. This gives equilibrium to the Universe; but, on the earth plane she is at odds with life. This has given man the power to control and tyrannize over her without any willful intention of so doing; it has blinded his perception and understanding of his own position and hers. Naturally he has confined her to a 'sphere' and held her as an inferior.

"Now in the great Universal plan, Matter is the negative and Spirit the positive; Spirit is the Life, Matter a crystalized condition of Spirit emanations. Matter is in a condition of evolution, an *imperfection* in search of a *knowledge of its way back to its home in Spirit*. Thus you see, the more spiritual a life is, the nearer to the

Perfect life it comes. And woman is out of her element in earth life, and consequently must suffer more and struggle harder than man, but once freed from the body, the reverse is the case. She is farther on her journey than man.

"Woman is compelled to be more unselfish than man, because here on earth, she is, from the nature of things, subservient to man, on account of his magnetic power over her. But spirit power is unseen, and in *reality* woman controls man through his psychic life. Man is often aware of this and willing to acknowledge it, but he does not understand why, or how.

"Now when man arrives at an understanding of the case and a degree of development that will enable him to see the way, which he must put away his egotism to do, and is willing woman shall have as much freedom to choose her 'sphere' as he has to choose his, and both drift where they belong, the problem is solved as far as it can be, here; for this life is necessarily imperfect and must ever be; but we increase the necessary suffering by our egotism, our bigotry, our general blindness, and above all, our selfishness."

"The case is perfectly clear to me. It opens up a field of thought that will occupy me many a day; but you must rest now, you have not thought how tense and eager you were. Let us go to the theatre and relax our minds."

This theory was clearly demonstrated in Margaret Stanley and Mr. Gordon. They were so much in harmony, that it was impossible for them to live apart. There is no space or distance to thought. All space is

mind, and all mind is one, a unit. The nature of mind is not changed when it is individualized, and personal absence does not mean mental separation.

The thought of each was constantly dwelling on the other. A monotone, a moaning current like that of the sea, was an abiding presence with them. No matter how many were present, no matter how much entertained or how happy, each was necessary to the other to make happiness complete. Invisible arms were ever reaching out from each to the other. Even while the conduct of the surface life was in many ways uncongenial to each other, even temper-trying and hateful, still that intense longing and restless yearning remains for something undefined, that could only be satisfied by the complement of the other.

Margaret's soul yearned for the presence of Mr. Gordon; and he with less patience,—never being used to having his will curbed except by his own desire—was simply mad; quite beside himself with the irritation of feeling that he himself was the cause of the separation and foolishly and needlessly, too.

He saw, though dimly, how his love of power, his sense of ownership, had led him to give rein to his temper, and to be most unreasonable; while yet he had no claim upon her except that he loved her and in his own thought had appropriated her without as much as saying, "by your leave." In short he had treated Margaret just as he did himself, for no one abuses us as much as we abuse ourselves with our tempers and unreasonableness; and because he felt so much at one

with her, he could not realize where his own individuality left off and hers began.

If things did not go to please him, he generally stormed and raged within himself. Or, if he was grieved, he descended into deepest despondency, seeing life at its gloomiest, turning it over constantly and dwelling upon it, finally laying himself out with a headache that racked his body as much as his mind had been torn, and physically impressing upon his other self (Margaret) the effect of his agitation and despair; and her mind was torn and tossed with an unrest and agony she could not at all understand, and that took all her fortitude to bear.

While he was in Margaret's presence, he had forgotten the rules of politeness he observed before others; by feeling her so much himself, he had acted out the inner self he was so careful to conceal from others.

He had been grieved and annoyed at the thought of her leaving him, and instead of trying to induce her to stay, by being more kind, and making himself more attractive and desirable as a companion, he had shown the worst side of himself, and by so doing had hastened the very thing he was most anxious to avoid, and had laid the blame at her door most unreasonably. Of course he was astonished at her want of penetration in not seeing it was all because he loved her and desired her so much.

Some men are so impressed with their own dignity and importance they forget the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as ye would they should do to you," and withhold any demonstration of affection from the woman they

love (at the same time exacting it from her in the highest degree), only when he is pursuing her and uncertain of his "game,"—for do not men regard women as game? I know it sounds coarse when one says it, but is it not literally true?

But alas! How artful is the average man. Does he think it worth his while to pay her the little spontaneous attentions so highly prized? When the net is securely drawn around her and he thinks she is his own, then his dignity asserts itself and she must do the adoring, he can no longer take the trouble. No thought of what is agreeable to her enters his head, even when he really loves her, and would be most miserable without her. Such men always choose the affectionate and demonstrative wives, and then deliberately chill their hearts out and keep them "dissolved in tears" if they are that kind, or frozen into indignation and final indifference.

Oh, man, man! It take so little to make a woman happy,—a little thoughtfulness for her tastes and comfort, a few affectionate words that are well deserved. It is so little. If you had pursued this course with your wives and those nearest you, how much clamor for woman's rights would there be, do you think? The right to be loved and appreciated is what is denied us though we do not realize what it is always; we are restless and uneasy because the necessities of our nature are with-held us,—constancy, unselfish love, truthfulness and honor, *just what is expected of us*, is what we are seeking for, but most of all, liberty to do that which seems to us best, since we cannot have what our natures

most crave. The unnecessary tyrannies of the male nature are what we rebel against.

So Mr. Gordon had widened instead of lessening the breach between Margaret and himself, and put her "on her metal" to resist him, to hold herself to herself, and she did it well, though through her ignorance, with much pain and suffering.

And now she was gone! she who was the complement of his life, his other self; and the worse of it was he had not understood when she was with him, how much she was to him and what comfort there was in just the feeling that she was there when he wanted her though he might not see her for days and some other less cared for woman had absorbed his attention during that time. But now, now! he could not see her or even hear from her! His grief and rage knew no bounds! he wandered here and there, possessed by the very demon of unrest.

And what of Margaret? Poor Margaret. She had gone back to her home and its solitudes, the deepest of all solitudes, that of the Soul. She did not understand, though she knew more of the inner life than he did.

She was bewildered. Comparatively unacquainted with the ways of men, she now entirely misunderstood his character and was smarting under the sense of his injustice to her, and surprised at his exhibition of selfishness. He whom she had looked up to as the soul of honor, chivalry and refinement, he had been absolutely right-down vulgar; had done what any hod-carrier or coal-heaver might, been brutal to her, and worst of all, laid all the blame to her; she who was so

innocent, and had all along borne blame that belonged to him. Ugh! it fairly made her shiver. How had she failed,—what had she done,—how he could so lower himself,—were the ever recurring questions to her.

If she had yielded to irritation and said disagreeable things, it was because he started the ball that way and she could not check it at once. She thought she had tried the best she could to be gentle and womanly; to soothe instead of irritate; as far as she could see, she had done nothing incompatible with the strictest rules of friendship, and yet she had lost him! She must have been wrong some way, but she could not see how.

Then sometimes a hot indignation possessed her. She saw it as it was; and despised him for his want of courtesy and self-control, and in her heart she execrated him, shut her teeth hard and declared she would never bestow another thought upon one so unworthy.

Then for a time she had peace. She attended to home duties, tried to make people happy, took solid comfort in her life as she had before she went from home, and before Mr. Langley had opened her eyes to the world.

CHAPTER XII.

Growth of Bington.—Andrew.—Gordon Starts to See Margaret.—Repents.—Returns.—Mental Telepathy.

THE growth of a community is peculiar. Its people plod along in a humdrum way, chewing the cud of contentment for years, knowing or thinking nothing beyond their every day lives and the ways of their grandfathers; until some auspicious day a stranger ventures among them with a fresh breath from the outer world and plants a new idea, and lo! in a short space of time the diminutive seed he has planted has grown to a tree, under the branches of which sit the advanced thinkers to plan new ways and means, and the quiet little country town is soon growing into a busy village. The law of evolution obtains, and the staid old world moves for them as well as for others. So it was with the little town of Bington, where the everlasting hills towered high above, and everlasting monotony had reigned supreme over all their heads, and the placid river had flowed broad, deep and idly at their feet for ages.

Andrew had also imbibed from Mr. Langley the spirit of unrest, but he did not care to go away from his native hills, or leave his father alone in his advancing years. However, he could not give up all his life to farming, he must have a broader field, he must

mix with men, join the business world and keep pace with life. So he utilized the lazy old river, set it a task and made it work like the rest of the world. He built a factory for the construction of farming implements, a manufactory of hardware.

Then workmen must be procured, homes built for them and stores opened where they could buy needful things. These started other projects till what had been a staid old farming town was now a busy and rapidly growing place.

Margaret and Rena took up new interests, for the whole town was astir. Everyone, man, woman and child, was fired with new zeal to do something. So Margaret's hands and heart were full of her everyday life. She was busy and happy, but the gnawing worm of discontent and loneliness was ever at work and her soul wandered as one lost to find its "missing link."

But life strode on. The days flew, and she heard nothing from her former friend. Letters from her aunt and other friends occasionally spoke of him, but she read with an apathy that said to her she had no part with him and did not wish to have. Henceforth her life was away from his and she so desired it.

Many months had passed. Mr. Gordon had busied himself as best he could, and his ruffled spirit had become calmed and disciplined. Many times he had thought he would go and see Margaret, learn how she felt toward him and ask her to forgive him, for now at this distance he could better see where he had been at fault. In fact he had been aware of it all the while but would not acknowledge it to himself, he was too

sore and angry. But now he thought he would tell her all his mind about it. His need for her was so great he would do anything to have her friendship again, to even see her occasionally, to talk to her, and perhaps after awhile he could so discipline himself he would regain her confidence to that extent a nearer tie might be possible, for he could not bring himself to tolerate a life without her.

Finally one day, after a restless night he took the earliest train that would take him to Margaret, with courage high. He thought he *would* be master of himself and not such a coward.

But once on the train his view changed. Grave doubts came up. He saw her side of the question more plainly than he ever had before. How patient she had been with him. How she had so often tried to change the subject, present it in a different light and so soothe his ruffled feelings, but how he, ruffian-like, had persisted until finally she stood before him in her calm and dignified but determined anger and bade him go his own way and she would go hers.

Something in his remembrance of it appalled him. No, he could not go to her and meet that look again. He knew she was uniformly kind, but he feared himself, feared that he was not strong enough, and if he should forget himself and say something rude again he knew that would prevent what he so ardently desired. No, he would go home and wait a little longer, and at the next station he left the train and took the first one back to the city.

That morning Margaret awoke with an intense desire

to see him. It fairly took her strength away. How could she possibly live any longer without him. She went about her duties draggingly and heavy-eyed, and yet she had slept well and could think of no reason why she should feel as she did either mentally or physically. But as the day progressed and her mind kept dwelling on him she grew indignant at the way he had treated her. She went over the whole matter and could not see why she had not done the best she could. She did not wish to see him. No, not for worlds would she subject herself to his influence again. It made her tired to even think of it. It required so much vitality to resist his tempers and unreasonableness, she was glad she was free and need not see him again. She was sure he would never be any better and it would make it all the harder to be disappointed again. From the standpoint of the psychometrist it is easy for the careful student reader to trace the influence of one mind on the other and one can plainly see that Margaret's physical languor of the morning was from Mr. Gordon's restless and uncomfortable thoughts during the night, and the train of thought through the day was a reflection of his mind while on the cars.

His mind suggested to hers the desire to see him and her subsequent reasoning only shadowed his thoughts. His decision about himself, added to her former experience, led her to carry out her conclusions as she did. What was already in her mind from her experience with him gave directness to the reflection from his thought, and as he had not confidence in himself, so she felt

that no matter what happened her confidence in him could never be restored. She thought he had been so untrue to himself the foundations of his character must be weak and insecure. If she could not trust him in his outward conduct she certainly could not in his private life, and she wanted none of him.

So for days and weeks she would put him out of her thoughts and feel heartily thankful he had discovered himself in time. Her spiritual nature triumphed and she was free.

This phase of her thought would again telegraph itself to him and lay him mentally prostrate, giving his Soul a chance to work itself up and out of the debris of self-abasement, and come into a higher light and growth till again hope would spring up, seek its complement, and her Soul would respond and confidence again revive in her heart, and the old desire to see him, hear his voice, to touch his hand, would overcome all her fancied security and the revival of her love be again an intense torture. Yet, after each experience the soul would rise victorious another step on its road of progress; something would be overcome and the weight of error lessened. "Post tenebræ lux." After darkness light. This is why we "suffer and grow strong," we are denied our most intense desires for a time to compel us to lift from the soul the weight of selfish and ignorant thoughts and give it that much more of freedom towards the goal of its evolution, Spirit.

In this way the ball rolled from one to the other but the thread never broke and a woof was woven that was

indestructible because that which held it was a soul force which must work itself out "through much tribulation."

Happiness must be earned by killing out selfishness and the more there is to overcome the longer and harder the lesson. This is no new theory, but the experience of all humanity since the world began.

In this case, both being such strong characters, the struggle was a hard and bitter one. Sometimes a mood of mind would overtake him when he felt savage and cruel, because she had thwarted his will—as he then saw it—and he would feel like doing almost any desperate thing to compel her to reinstate him, when his love was so strong with the feeling that she was his and he hers, and he determined he would have her at any cost; he would do her personal violence; he would choke her until she would say she loved him. When that mental telegram reached her (as it surely must) she hated him, fancied he had put indignities upon her and wished she could in some way be revenged upon him, and she bitterly resented her inability to separate herself from him, and held herself in deepest humiliation for her weakness.

Happily these moods did not last long, and the calm that followed the mental cyclone was the Soul's opportunity again. Says Helen Wilmans, "The educational uses of rough experiences are beyond computation, evidently the most direct road to Heaven is through Hell."

CHAPTER XIII.

Tom's Misery.—He Goes Home to Tell of His Coming Marriage.—Scenes.—Rena's Agony and Self-Control.—Tom's Marriage to Corinne.

POOR Tom was in no enviable frame of mind. His marriage with Corinne was approaching and as yet Rena was entirely ignorant of it. Her letters were free and natural, bright and happy; she wrote as she thought and Tom was her ideal. To be sure, no word of love had passed between them, she never even thought of that as being at all necessary. Tom was hers. He was as much a part of her life as her own thoughts; there was no need to say anything, and everything in his conduct to her said he reciprocated her feeling; nothing could convince her any more than she was now convinced that he loved her. It never entered her mind that it could be otherwise. She lived in, and for him, each happy hour of the day, and all hours were happy, for whatever of discord came up it was as nothing to her for she was fortified against everything by the sustaining power of a mutual love. Tom felt this. His eyes were opened to the situation, hers were shut.

How could he ever bring this blight upon her young life? Was there no way of escape for him? Would nothing release him from this terrible situation? Could

it be possible that the days would keep crawling on slowly but surely to the time when she must know?

At times his agony was frightful. He could not bear to have a moment of leisure in which to think; he worked at something incessantly, but then a time would come when he must try to sleep. Then it was agonizing.

His life with Cora might be endurable if it were not for Rena, but when he remembered how Cora had stepped in between him and the woman he loved, he detested her, much as he tried to feel otherwise, for he knew that her only sin was in loving him and she honestly believed he loved her, and no thought of any other woman in connection with Tom ever stepped in to disturb her mind. He was her God. What a situation for a conscientious man like Tom!

Cora was not as self-centered as Rena, and was frail and delicate in health, and Tom knew of the two, Rena would bear the disappointment much better. Both her character and her strength were greater and her will well under control, and he knew she would bear disappointment bravely.

But oh, merciful God! how she would despise him! And he quailed in spirit when he pictured her scorn of the man who had betrayed her love. He tried to write coldly and in that way give her a little preparation for what was coming, but her warm loving letters, so full of life and happiness, entirely took away his power to do so. His hand would not write the words, he could not even frame them in his mind, and every line was full of affection; his soul spoke the love his lips must conceal.

What could he do?

At last the day came when he must inform his family. He knew they always had expected he would marry Rena, and she had been looked upon as one of the family and consulted in all matters of importance the same as if she were his wife.

What would they say?

The wedding arrangements were all made, only one month intervened, and he *must* go home and tell them. He longed to have it over, but dreaded it almost like death.

All the way he wrestled with himself and invoked the aid of the higher powers to carry him through the ordeal.

He was expected at home and greeted with all the love of their full hearts for him.

"Well, well! my son, it is good to see you here," said his father, and his strong hand-clasp emphasized his words, while Tom's mother and sisters hung round him with tears of joy. Do "coming events" always cast their shadows before? Never had Tom had such a greeting. There was something in the air he had not felt previously, a joy that was tempestuous and not the peaceful love he had always known before. The atmosphere was charged, they were intensely glad to see him, never more so, but—What?

Alas! the mental telegraph had been at work here too. Tom's unrest and agony had reached there before him. His mother looked at him anxiously, his sisters almost trembled at the something strange about him, and after supper when they sat down to have a quiet

talk, a hush of expectancy came over them, and no one cared to speak. At last it came.

"Mother, I have some news for you," said Tom, "good news I hope you will think. I want you and the girls to get all your finery ready to come to the city to see the greatest event of my life take place."

"Oh! what it is?" came from the girls and the mother's voice trembled as she asked, "What do you mean, my son?"

"Well, mother, it is nothing very frightful, I am going to be married one month from to-day."

"What! and Rena never told us? That is not like her," said his mother.

"No, mother, Rena does not know it."

A chorus of voices said, "Rena not know it! What can you mean, Tom?"

"I am going to marry Corinne Langley, the daughter of my employer." No one said a word; they could not comprehend it. Tom married, and not to Rena! Had the world come to an end? They certainly felt as if it had.

The sisters covered their faces and wept bitterly; his mother rocked herself to and fro, trembling like an aspen, and his father rose and walked the floor in great excitement. Then Tom told them how beautiful Corinne was and how she loved him so much more than he deserved, he, a great hulking fellow, and she a delicate flower,—told them how utterly unworthy he felt of all the kindness the family had heaped upon him, even to the giving of their best beloved daughter, their only one.

He thrilled them all with his earnestness and carried them with him by his glowing description. But a sudden thought struck Rose, his youngest sister and she gasped, "Rena, Tom! Rena! What will she say? We always thought you loved her and would marry her. I don't believe she ever thought of any man but you; it will break her heart!"

"Oh, no, Rose; Rena cares for me only as a friend. We were children together and she loves me as a brother. She has always been my little sister, the same as you have. She will be glad for my happiness."

"But, Tom," said his graver sister Sara, "you cannot mean what you say. I am sure we always thought of her as your future wife, and I think the Stanleys have always felt as we do about it, and so has everyone around here. Why, it was taken as a matter of course and no one thought of any other way. Everyone will be disappointed. We have no objection to Corinne, but we want Rena," and the girl's honest eyes filled with tears as she thought about it.

Mr. Merwin with his hands in his pockets and still walking up and down said, "Well, Tom, I can't deny that I am sadly disappointed, but it is your affair, and we have no right to meddle with it. We shall always love Rena just the same, and shall try to like your new wife, and you will always be our son, and we know you mean to do right, but I am afraid the Stanleys will not feel as we do about it."

They talked it over, and Tom with worldly wisdom showed them what an advantage it would be to him to marry Mr. Langley's daughter; how it would advance

his business interests and give him prestige in society, until they came to the conclusion that he had become contaminated by contact with the world and had done as many men had before him. While they grieved over it they tried to make the best of it, and went to bed full of plans of preparation for the event which they had no power to change.

Tom's relief was great, but the worst was yet to come, and when he wended his way to the Stanley farm the next morning he felt as if he had committed all the crimes in the calendar and had got to confess to them. He had made up his mind that nothing would help Rena so much as to think him unworthy her love, and he resolved to let her think he was the villain he seemed, and although the role was a hard one for poor honest Tom, he was resolved to play it as best he could.

His coming was a surprise to the Stanleys for he had thought best to have it so, and when he walked into the large airy kitchen and found Rena in her brown gingham apron washing dishes, Mrs. Stanley working over the golden balls of butter, and Margaret moulding the loaves of snowy bread, there was great surprise and consternation.

Rena was the last to see him and he had slipped in behind her, taken her face between his hands and pressed a resounding kiss upon her lips before she knew he was there.

His "Well, how's my little sister this morning," was as easy as though he had always met her that way.

Both Margaret and Mrs. Stanley were affectionately greeted, and Tom rather boisterously told them he had

come to bring some news, wonderfully good news that would be sure to please them. Then he tantalized them, a proceeding unlike the thoughtful Tom they had known.

He said he had organized an expedition to explore Africa and had come to pay them his last visit before sailing, but his smiling face belied his words and they scouted the idea. Then he told them a long story about a friend who was an aeronaut and had persuaded him to go up in a balloon, and as he had always wanted "to see the world" he might as well make one job of it and see it from a high point of view. But they would not believe that, and then he said he was going to turn diver and search for pearls in the bottom of the sea and he coaxed Rena to go, too, to protect him from the devil fish whose clutch he feared. And at last after much bantering he said he was coming down to business now, and he placed them in a row, Mrs. Stanley in the middle and after great laughter and fun and much painstaking on his part to get the row straight and the right kind of a smile on their faces, such as a photographer would desire, he said, "I'M—GOING—TO—BE—MARRIED ONE—MONTH—FROM—TO-DAY. AND—I—WANT—YOU—ALL—TO —COME—TO—THE—WEDDING!" Then he held out his arms to catch them "if they fainted," but never daring to glance at Rena.

He entered into the particulars only enough to tell them when to come to the wedding, and said the girls were coming to tell the rest for he had only time to catch his train and must be off, but even then they did

not realize the truth, and waited for something more until he had actually gone. Then they stood where he had left them gazing into each other's faces, aghast!

With a sigh of relief, but in the deepest humiliation and grief, he strode home, picturing to himself what they would say and feel when they knew it was really true. His knees trembled and his heart stood still as he thought of it. There was great excitement at the Stanley farm after he had gone and had not denied his strange story. Could he have meant it? Was it true?

After they had come to the conclusion that it must be true, they could not rise out of his mental suggestion that it must all be a joke. In his desire to escape before they realized it, he had (unconsciously) thoroughly magnetized them, and it was hard to wake out of it, and it was only after much talk among themselves and discussion with Mr. Stanley and Andrew that they could accept it; then the knowledge had come to them so slowly, they had been spared a shock. Not till after the girls had been over to explain, however, did they realize the truth. Then Tom had ceased to be their old friend, and was a contaminated man of the world, and led astray by Corrine's beauty and position. Bitterly did they deplore it, but Rena made no sign, and Tom's sisters went home happy, for if Rena did not care, why should they, as long as it was so much better for Tom? Mr. Langley was going to take him into the business on the day of his marriage. The bustle of preparation kept them busy, but they were not happy over it. Something undefinable made them feel very uneasy about Tom, and it was a sad blow to all their plans.

They loved Rena and could not adjust their minds to Corinne.

All night Rena lay with wide-open eyes trying to think—to realize it. Could that be Tom, her Tom that she had loved all her life; he who had been to her the very soul of honor, next to God to her? Could he have broken his faith with her? Looking back she knew he had loved her and she recalled many things he had said that assured her he had meant to make her his wife. And now he was going to sell himself! Marry for mere money and position! Nothing had been said about his love for the beautiful girl who was going to give herself to him. Could God allow the heart of an apparently good man to be so base?

Rena was at first too indignant to be hurt. The revulsion of feeling was so complete and sudden. She seemed filled with a sort of grim curiosity to search out the meaning of it. She had not yet come to realize the bearing of it upon her life.

At last it came and overwhelmed and engulfed her in the depths of despair. Her forsaken and blighted life, her youth and the long weary years before her with half of herself stricken out, given to a new acquaintance only because she was rich and beautiful and loved him. And *she* must be left all these long sad years without even a letter, denied even the stimulus of his thought! She had nothing left to live for.

But all this was as nothing compared to the feeling that he was unworthy,—that she had been deceived in him; and now her suspicions being aroused, she could see, she thought, a systematic plan to deceive her. She

had read of such things, but how could it come to *her* who had always loved him since she could remember, and she longed to weep, to get some relief, but tears were denied her. Her eyes were as dry as her heart was shriveled and burned. Was there a God that could let such things be?

And he had dared to kiss her when he came on such an errand! She sprang out of bed in a fury and walked the floor wildly until she could walk no more. When the morning light came, she threw herself on the bed in a state of exhaustion and slept.

At the usual hour she arose, dressed, and went about her duties as calmly as if nothing had happened, holding herself in perfect self-possession and quietness through the day. She shrank from nothing. It was necessary to decide whether they would go to the wedding. Mrs. Stanley would not think of it, but Rena announced at once that she would go. To herself she said no one should know that her life had been blighted; her home should not be made unhappy by her repining; she would keep it all to herself as much as possible and live as well as she could.

But the tortures she suffered were indescribable. The nights were long drawn agonies because she relaxed the tension of her mind held through the days, which was one supreme effort to rise above herself and hide her sorrow. It was terrible, but Tom at least, and all the others should see that she could go to his wedding as unconcerned as he came to impart the news to her.

She carefully planned her costume that he should see her at her best, and that there should be no sharp con-

trasts between her and his beautiful bride. Oh! how she ground her teeth at the thought, but she would do it, and it should not kill her either.

It was one of the Indian summer days in October when the trees were gay with their autumn dress and the air was soft and mellow as only autumn days can be, that they arrived at the house of Mr. Langley and were assigned a room in which to make their toilet.

Nature had done her best in the way of decorations. The extensive grounds were filled with shrubbery and many trees, all arrayed in their most brilliant autumn dress and gorgeous to behold. The grounds were formerly a forest and some of the noblest trees had been saved. The maples were in a blaze of glory. The oaks clothed in their loveliest browns and the occasional clusters of sumachs were all aflame, while the pines added their intense green. A purling stream that ran through the grounds sang merrily as it rippled over the moss-grown stones and floated its tiny craft of fallen leaves toward the broad river in which they would soon be lost.

Inside the house were flowers everywhere. Great banks of fern and tall palms were arranged most effectively and everything money and a cultured taste could supply, was done, for at the marriage of their only daughter to the man they respected and loved, no expense must be spared.

Rena had never before seen such elegance. Her short life had been spent in the country where God's magnificence prevailed. She felt small and strange, and she trembled, and it was only by the strongest

effort of her will that she could keep her teeth from chattering. But she succeeded so well that Margaret who loved her and watched her so closely did not detect her misery and trepidation. For was not Tom, her Tom, going to live among all those things? He was perfectly at home there, and what was strange and embarrassing to her was all a part of his daily life.

No wonder he felt at liberty to kiss a little country girl whom he found in the kitchen washing dishes. No wonder he preferred the beautiful home and the girl that went with it and had been brought up in it. Mr. and Mrs. Langley would not hear of their living anywhere else. It was easily explained, if he was the worldly man he now seemed to be. What was she but a verdant country girl with nothing to give him but herself!

With a heavy heart she acknowledged she could not blame him, but alas! Where was her hero, her brave Tom, who had proven too great a coward to face the world alone or to earn his own luxuries; who could settle down in a home bought by the efforts of another man, sell himself (for she knew he did not love (Corinne) rather than earn his own luxuries or live without them by the side of the woman he loved. Oh, what a humiliation, to know she had been so mistaken in him! She was glad she had found it out in time, but ah! the misery of it! The dead feeling about her heart! Would it always be so?

She was dressed now, and it was almost time for the nuptials. She must brace herself to meet the ordeal of seeing given to another the man she knew belonged to her.

Let us look at her now as she stands before the mirror putting the finishing touches to her costume. She is somewhat changed since she was first introduced to us.

Her brown hair continues to curl and is still an unmanageable mass of rings and waves that rebel as ever at any ordinary mode of arrangement, and can only be tied in a loose knot and allowed to wander at its own sweet will, a most becoming arrangement that sets off the brown eyes, aquiline nose, fair complexion, and general high-bred look.

She was not beautiful as a dream, as novelists put it, but she had a face full of character, loving and tender, and a perfect and rather petite form that was firmly knit and strong as the nature it represented. She was a personality that would attract attention anywhere. She was infinitely more than a pretty girl. But it was when she spoke that she was most charming, for the changing expressions rippled over her face like the merry sparkles of the brook, or the sunny waves of her own hair, and she was all life and brilliancy.

Now in a frock of blue silk and white India mull that Margaret's exquisite taste had selected, and the lovely pearls that Andrew had given her for the occasion, she was very beautiful, and the brother and sister were more than satisfied.

Though no word had been said to her and she had preserved a strict silence as to her feelings, the family felt Tom's behavior to her bitterly, and they were exultant that she bore it so well and made no sign. They well knew it was not because she was devoid of feeling and they spared no trouble or expense to put her at

her ease as much as possible for the occasion that was to mar her life and cost her a terrible struggle.

They knew her and felt sure of her, and as they met Andrew at the foot of the stairs and were ushered into the large drawing room, he was highly gratified with his two beautiful sisters. The effort Rena was making to control herself suffused her cheeks with a pink tint, brightened her eyes, and gave her an erect bearing, and every eye was turned towards her in admiration.

It happened that they were placed near the great floral bell under which the pair were to stand, and when the charming bride in her costly white satin and old lace with her beautiful diamonds, Tom's gift, made her appearance, both Margaret and Andrew involuntarily drew near to Rena, but not a muscle in her face changed, and when her eye met Tom's and the color faded out of his face, she returned his glance with perfect composure, for she was frozen to stone and did not know where she was, only realizing that the man she loved so fondly was being irrevocably given to another. She went through the congratulations with the same calm indifference, and only when she was safe home again away from all eyes did she let herself down to her misery. Let us leave her now to the guidance of her own soul that will evolve out of her struggle a higher growth and compensation.

Pretty Corinne, the wilful, spoiled child, was enchantingly happy. Tom was all hers now and oh, how she loved him!

And he? He was resigned. Truth to tell, he was bitterly disappointed at the cool way Rena took his

marriage. He had tormented himself night and day for her sake. He did not wish to see her unhappy, but he thought she would show some feeling. He had believed she loved him, but was he mistaken? She could never have seemed so unconscious if she did love him. He felt his own face blanch when his eyes met hers, and strong man as he was, it had seemed as though he must fall. But she had just the same pleasant light in her eyes she always wore. No spasm of pain crossed her face, only a look of perfect unconcern rested there. He was cut to the quick; he forgot everything but that she did not care. After all these years that she should not care! And he started on his wedding trip with a heavier heart than he had before.

Tom was like all the rest of the male kind; no matter what they do they always expect the woman they love to be constant to them as well as immensely grieved if they are separated from them. He fully expected that Rena would absent herself from his wedding.

How could she see him given to another woman? He had thought of her as weeping bitter tears alone in her room at that hour, and promised himself he would think of her, send his whole heart to her where it belonged, and render her that justice, though he had to give his outward self to another.

But she had presented herself smiling and calm as a June morning, and as rapturously lovely too, with no more care for what was going on right under her eyes, than if it were the most commonplace affair in the world. She did not seem impressed with its magnificence even, and he had thought she would form a kind

of excuse for him as long as she thought love of display was one of his motives, poor consolation though it was. He was thoroughly disappointed all around, so he tried to dismiss the subject from his mind by devoting himself to his wife. He would at least make her happy so that some one might profit by this sad business if she were (unwittingly) the cause, and as he looked at the beautiful girl nestling close to him, he gathered her in his arms and vowed to himself he would put the old love away and learn to make the new wife all in all to him.

CHAPTER XIV.

Andrew.—Mr. Burns and Family.—Growth of Bington.—
Mental Telepathy.—Rena's Victory.

ANDREW had not entered upon his business venture alone. He had no knowledge of mechanical business and not enough capital to carry it on by himself. His published book upon the "Science of Agriculture" had met with favor with men interested in the subject; and among them was a man well known in those circles, who had the subject so much at heart he had taken pains to visit Andrew. Finding him all that could be desired, and the location and general facilities favorable, he had proposed manufacturing some of the implements which as Agricultural Scientists they thought were necessary for the furtherance of their plans.

This gentleman resolved to move to Bington with his family, and add his business experience to the capital Andrew would furnish and so try to advance the cause of scientific farming. It was through this means the town had started into a new growth and activity.

Mr. Burns was a man of some sixty years with an extended business experience. A genial, good natured man of great originality, and cheerfulness, with a keen and searching mind, a fund of stories always at hand and a marvelous adaptiveness in telling them; he gen-

erally left everyone he met in a broad laugh, and was everywhere gladly welcomed both by young and old.

His wife had died some years before, and left him with two sons and a daughter; the younger boy and girl being twins now eighteen years old. The older son who was twenty-two, entered with zest into the new business project.

Mr. Stanley owned quite a large tract of land, and a site was bought for a house, which eventually was finished, and the Burns family settled there. That portion of Mr. Stanley's farm adjoining the factory was soon cut up into streets and building lots, and as the great factory loomed up, houses sprang into view also and the whole place was transformed.

But the seclusion of the farmhouse had been preserved and the Burns residence was also set back on the slope of the hill and near the farm.

The village ran towards the north, and the two houses faced east and the river. Back towards the southeast towered the mountain covered with a dense forest, at the base of which nestled the cozy and comfortable farm house.

The relations between the two families were very pleasant, and the Stanleys exerted themselves to make the strangers acquainted in the town, and their time pass pleasantly.

The Burns family were very musical and the Stanleys intellectually inclined, but each was interested in the favorite pursuit of the other, and the variety was very agreeable.

The new impetus in the growth of the place had

drawn out the people who before were but dull, plodding farmers, into something quite different; and "sociables," fairs, picnics and musicals and all entertainments common in such places were quite frequent; indeed, the reaction had set in so strongly in that direction they were quite dissipated, in their mild way, and they were astonished to find so much talent among them of one sort and another that had been buried in obscurity so long.

But the good people were not awake to the fact that all this growth and progress started from a rolling stone under a horse's foot. But remember, "Great trees from little acorns grow."

The formerly quiet and staid town was now greeted in the morning and at noon with the deep-toned factory whistle, and the streets were busy with the tramping feet of the hurrying workman. The stores were lively, the barber shops and saloons were well patronized; even bootblacks were seen on the street, and a peanut vender was contentedly turning his roaster with an eye to future riches. The town grew almost as rapidly as some of our phenomenal western towns. Other projects were afoot to utilize the water power, and only the "everlasting hills" were undisturbed.

Rena and Bounce had taken to their former habits of rambling again. She was well and apparently happy, but restless as the ocean, and as with all the other changes a maid-of-all-work had been added to the farmhouse, she was at liberty to rove at will.

Andrew thought his mother had done work enough to have earned her rest, and the girls now found so

much to occupy them outside the home, that a buxom house-maid had been found, leaving them an opportunity to seek more congenial employments.

Mr. Stanley had reared and trained a colt for the girls to ride, and many pleasant afternoons saw Margaret and her mother in the phaeton, and Rena mounted on Prince with Bounce running merrily after, all at the height of enjoyment. If there had been no undercurrent of heartaches there would have been perfect happiness. But that most potent spectre always appears to prevent such consummation,—that awful undercurrent of heartache.

Rena had also taken to her mountain excursions again, and she walked miles and miles with the faithful dog ever by her side; not rompingly now as of old, but sometimes slowly and gravely, and again with feverish haste, spurred on by a tormenting unrest that nothing but action could allay.

Anyone who could have looked in upon Tom at that time, might have found him nervous and irritated generally at some petty and unreasonable conceit of Corinne's that had exasperated him to the last degree, something which he assented to as graciously as he could, but which stayed with him all day, pricking him as though he were wearing a chestnut burr next to his skin.

In those days he was always turning over and over in his mind how different it would have been with Rena, and what she would have done under the circumstances, and how she would think he ought to act, picturing her in Corinne's place. Then would come

the agony to both through mental telegraphy. Sometimes he had a sort of inkling of her feeling; of the pride that made her go to his wedding and appear so unconcerned, and his heart ached for her, and his admiration for her self-control was unbounded. As for himself, he loved her more fondly than ever, and dreaded to go home to Corinne who was capricious and petulant and at times very exacting.

She was never well for she constantly fretted herself into illness. She possessed one of those temperaments that if she were unhappy or sick, expected every one else to be uncomfortable, and it was not her fault if every one was not. She tyrannized over Tom, who, considering all things, did his best to please her and it was generally a difficult task.

But wherever he was or whatever he was doing, the undercurrent of his thought was always Rena. Try as he would he could not get away from it, and so her thought was ever attracted to him.

Mr. Burns' eldest son Robert, was a true son of his namesake. Of a musical and poetical temperament, with a mother-wit that came in at all times and places, he was a great favorite everywhere, and his daily task of keeping the books at the factory so taxed his powers of endurance that he was running over with fun and hilarity always when not at the interminable figures, the "everlasting grind" as he termed it. He was the life of the circle in which he moved and everywhere sought for in all the merry-makings. The younger brother and sister were lively and entertaining and great friends of the Stanleys, and Rena and Kitty spent

many pleasant hours together, and life now flowed smoothly with them all.

Rena's self-control had been wonderful. She spoke of Tom in the most matter-of-fact way, quite cheating herself even, sometimes, into thinking she did not care about his marriage at all. It had changed the whole current of her mind, but while she recognized the change, she did not attribute it to the true cause. She thought she was growing older, getting experience (as she was); indeed, sometimes she felt very old, and the cares of the nation seemed to rest on her shoulders; but that was when Tom was unusually oppressed with care, only she did not know it.

So do our lives blend in the unseen, and very few, if any of us, live to ourselves. Some few are such absorbents that they literally "keep what they have, and get what they can" from everyone. Vampires! sucking the life blood of any defenseless mortal within their range. But most of us give while we receive, otherwise, humanity would be thoroughly unbalanced.

CHAPTER XV.

Gordon Goes to Bington.—Meets Uncle Eben.—Sees Margaret with Another Man.—Insane Jealousy.—Goes Home and Starts for Africa.—Uriel Brice.—His Mother.

“HELLO, Gordon! Where are you off to now?” said one of the friends of that gentleman as he was stepping into a carriage at his own door from which had just driven away a baggage van heavily loaded, and upon which was his own man evidently prepared for a long journey.

“Oh, I’ve taken a fancy to explore Egypt and Syria this time. New York has become too small for me. Good-bye, my boy.” And hastening to the carriage he was driven rapidly away.

“I wonder what has got into Gordon lately, he has hardly seemed himself. Some woman, I suppose; that’s the way it is with all of us. Too bad! he’s a good fellow, true as steel. I wonder what woman could have power over him to make him start off like this. Fate, I suppose. Well, God speed you friend and take you into smooth waters again.”

An hour later saw Gordon on the great steamer moving out of the harbor, while his stern, set face as he watched the receding city, showed to a close observer that no light motive had influenced his departure.

Could we have read his thoughts we should have

heard him saying, "Oh, Margaret, Margaret, light of my life! The book has closed; our paths must diverge from now on. Henceforth life is only a burden to me, a blank." Then he ground his teeth and said under his breath, "Damn him! I'd like to wring his neck. It was bad enough before, but now it is utterly hopeless. He's a scoundrel, too, I know by his looks. If he hurts her!" and his fingers closed into his palms with such force as to leave marks on his sensitive flesh. "Here am I, driven to the ends of the world, I, who love her, love her better than life or death even, for that blatant scoundrel with his smooth, sanctimonious face. But after all it is my own fault. My accursed, disagreeable temper did it all. I had the chance, and she might have loved me if I had not been so overbearing and selfish. I tried to bring her proud, sensitive spirit under my control,—to my idea of what a woman should be to a man,—*and forgot she might want to be something to herself.* I was so hungry for her love, for her entire submission to me, because I loved her; and in my fierce desire for her I made a brute of myself. Great God! what an idiot! what a selfish beast! But I was loyal to her though, only I expected her, with her fine intuition, to understand that, and would not tell her so. I did not think how my acts were giving the lie to my thoughts. I wanted to test her intuition, to have her find it out herself, and did not see I was crushing the growth I sought to accelerate.

"But now, now! I give it up since that damned scoundrel appeared on the scene." And so he raved

until dinner was announced and he had to come out of himself and mix with his fellow passengers.

Let us retrace our steps to about a month previous to Mr. Gordon's departure for Europe.

We shall find him in his own room late at night in one of his "villainous" bilious attacks, just sick enough to long with all his soul for Margaret. He thought of how quietly she would step around his room, of the touch of her soft hand upon his aching head, of all her thoughtful, gentle ways and her strong sustaining nature. He let his imagination drift over what a life with her would be. How entrancing to have her meet him at the door when he came in, of all her seductive ways that would make his heart bound with joy and gladness. Of her, in her regal beauty sitting at the head of his table, of—oh, everything!—and the contrast as he came back to himself, and saw himself alone in his own apartments with the racking pain and the everlasting sense of loss, too miserable even to call his man, was maddening. He walked the floor like a caged lion, until at last he lay down and fell into a heavy sleep that lasted late into the morning.

When he awoke it was with a sense of having had a fall, of being sore and bruised all over (caused by the fall of himself in his own estimation, and the soreness of his anger) and he could not recall where he had been or what had happened, and it was only after his man had been in and brought his cup of coffee and toast, that he could remember at all what was the matter with him.

But then he thought it all over and came to the conclusion he could not stand things as they were and he would go and see Margaret. This time nothing should turn him from his purpose; he would lay himself at her feet, frankly and honestly plead for her love, and await her verdict, and it should, it *must* be favorable. He would not take a negative answer, he knew he could make her happy, she belonged to him, was his, and he would have her.

Again he took the train for Bington, and this time he so nursed his stern resolve, that in due time he arrived at the station of the town and proceeded to make inquiries of a garrulous, old man sunning himself on a baggage truck. "The Stanleys? Oh, yes, I knows the Stanleys; known 'em ever since they fust marrid each other. In fact, I played the fiddle at ther weddin', an a fine weddin' it wuz, too. All the fust folks in the place wuz there,—the Deacon Barbers'es, Uncle Jabez King's folks, Squire Williams'es hull fam'ly, Dr. Collins'es folks, an' all the gentry the country round. Great times them wuz, Jedge, great times.

"But ther childun mostly died, only three left out'n the hull eight. But they's fine, Jedge, fine childun them is. Why there's Andrew, he's bin the making 'uv the hull town, Andrew has. He writ a book on farmin', 'twas a stunner, Jedge, a regler stunner, and thet brung a man here that knew suthin' about it'n they'v built the factory'n a lot 'o housen an' the stores, an' they've jest bin the makin' uv the hull town.

"Then there's little Reny, the puttiest gal ye ever see. But then ther's Margit! I tell ye, she's a stun-

ner! Margit is. Some on 'em call her Madge but I don't think it's good 'nuf fur her. She's thet kind of a gal thet makes ye think of a Queen Victory, she's so dignifi'd like. But I'll tell ye, Jedge (confidentially), I don't like her goin' round with thet book-keeping feller 'et the mill. They sez he wants ter mary her 'nd she's sweet on him, as the boys say, but I don't b'leve it. I don't like him eny how 'nd if he marries my queen Margit, I'll kick! I think he's a sneakin devil, though he seems powerful good; goes ter the meetin housen 'nd 's in fur all the plans ter ben'fit mankind, 'es he calls it, but in my 'pinon he's ther man he wants ter ben'fit, fur he's a crafty chap 'n I'm 'fraid mischif 'll cum uv it to Margit thru him. There they go, sure nuff!—See the loot, a peaking in her face an' talkin pretty talk, dang him! Yer see he looks putty nuff 'n women's easy took with good looking fellers." And as they drove by Margaret laughed and turned toward her companion, leaning slightly his way and looking so rosy and happy that Gordon felt ready to faint with anger and jealousy, and the old man shook his first at the handsome couple and said he "much fear'd he'd git 'er yit, but 'f 'e duz by jingo I'll—" and he turned to find himself alone, and talking to thin air, for Gordon was striding down the street like a wild man.

He! the elegant, refined, polished Mr. Gordon, traveler, millionaire, the admired of drawing-rooms, the envied man in Clubs, was wildly, insanely jealous; and if he had had a pistol and opportunity would have committed murder as easy as he would have taken off his hat, and with as little thought of the consequences.

What an idiot he was, he thought, to come all this distance after a woman who had forgotten him long ago, and was taking up with a blackleg of a book-keeper when *he* could give the heart of a man that would think of her always and never again give her cause for offense!

Then he railed at himself for driving her away from him, for he thought she had loved him. Finally he came to a realization of himself and found he was in the outskirts of the town with no house in sight, and in a state of perfect exhaustion.

He lay down under a tree on the soft, cool grass and went to work to think it all out. What should he do? Love said, seek Margaret and lay before her your honest heart. Pride said, wait. But he decided to try if he could not win her back to him; he felt she was more than worth the effort, and that it was due to himself, and perhaps to her, that he should do all he could. At all events he would do nothing rash, but would take time to come to a final conclusion in the matter.

And he did. He stayed in the town under another name three days; he walked and drove all over the place, hoping to meet her and to see if she would recognize him, but in vain. He drew out one and another, as a man can, to talk of the Stanleys until he thought he was thoroughly informed, and he came to the conclusion that what everyone thought was true, must be; and Margaret was really engaged to another man. He was over his fit of violence now and in a

much better mood. He saw there was nothing for him to do under the circumstances but give her up and leave the country and strive as best he could to forget his love, and blot out the object of it from his memory. And yet, he did not wish to do that; the pleasant hours he had passed with her were a part of him that he could not spare; they stood out in his life above all others.

He had had experiences before. He had thought he loved more than once, but nothing was like this, nothing could take the place of it. Yet he must, and would, learn to do without it. He made up his mind sadly to leave his native land again and plunge into the wilds of Africa, seeking adventure and danger, for why should he care to live? Life had lost its color for him; henceforth he might as well be devoured by lions and tigers, as to live and be slowly devoured by his own thoughts.

His faithful valet was eager to take up again the life of travel he had enjoyed so much before, but he suspected strongly that his master went in a very different spirit this time, though he knew not why; but he looked for more reckless wanderings and new dangers, and the prospect pleased him much.

Alas, for the impetuosity of man! If Gordon had listened to his heart and his desire, and set aside his jealousy and pride, he might now have been one of the happiest of men, instead of sailing away out of his world, sad and broken-hearted.

So it is we teach ourselves the lessons necessary for

us to learn, and charge to an imaginary God the mis-haps that are the direct effect of our own mismanagement.

And Margaret, poor Margaret! Just for one forced smile, and one desperate attempt to hide her real sorrow and grief, she is doomed to bury herself to live a lonely, unsatisfied life that no one could ever understand, and pass through trials that equaled in her spiritual nature all the physical dangers to be encountered among the wildest and fiercest beasts of the desert.

Uriel Brice was a small stock owner in the factory and the confidential book-keeper. He was born in an adjoining town, and was the youngest of ten children. His mother was a hard-working, fairly honest woman, who did the best she could for her children, but as the father was a shiftless, unprincipled sot, life had not been so easy for her that she could afford to live upon honor. To bear and rear ten children in any fashion at all with a brute of a husband that increased her cares and abused her and her children, does not, in any mother, conduce to great moral integrity.

If this woman sent her "brats" out to forage among her neighbors, and get what they could to fill their always-empty stomachs, and in any way they could, it was because she did not wish them to starve, and not because she had any grudge against her neighbors. What wonder the children learned to look out for themselves either by fair means or foul.

Uriel, being the youngest, fared better than the rest. His father had been killed in a drunken brawl

when he was a small child. The brothers and sisters had grown up and wandered away, some married, others died, and when he was twelve years old, Uriel and his mother lived alone in what to them was comfort. She took in washing and he went to school and did odd jobs for a few pennies.

He managed to pick up a fair education, and when a few years later, his mother died, he drifted to the city, and, beginning as office boy, he finally learned book-keeping, and as he knew so well how to live on little, he saved his money and improved himself in every way he could. He had an ambition, born probably, in the mind of his mother who had this one strong desire, to have this boy, her youngest, make something of himself, that is, to get rich; this was the goal of her ambition, as it is of many another.

This idea was early implanted in his mind and kept pace with his growth. It was this that led him to study the world and to play upon the weaknesses of mankind, also to use any and every means to further his ends, right or wrong, so long as he was not found out; for to his mind, therein lay the sin. He had cultivated a serene, smooth and rather deferential manner; was exceedingly obliging, and ever ready to lend a helping hand. He was an active Church member, and worked in the "Young Men's Christian Association," and though quite an irreproachable character, as far as the world knew, he was really crafty, cruel and unscrupulous.

In connection with the Church work he had met

Margaret and formed in his own mind a plan to marry her, and thus gain a foothold in the firm. And in his day-dreams he saw himself eventually at the head, with the other two managers crowded out,—a plan he had concocted in his own mind and which he was vigilantly nursing.

Margaret's immersion in her own sorrowful thoughts helped to further his plans. She was just doing something to keep from brooding over her trouble. One man was the same to her as another, and the crafty Brice had so managed that on her visits to the poor she should be called to the outlying districts, and, it being too far for her to walk, he as often as possible constituted himself her driver.

To Margaret he was only Brice the book-keeper, whom she wished to treat kindly and politely, and nothing more. He had managed by dropping a word here and an insinuation there, to have it talked about that they were engaged, Margaret being entirely unconscious of the most remote thought in that direction. This day she had walked out to see a friend, and Brice learning of the fact, had driven out and rode past the house just as she came out. In fact, he had waited in sight of the house until he saw her come out and had driven on quite unconsciously as it seemed, and having overtaken her seemed much surprised, and of course, invited her to ride. As she was feeling much depressed, both mentally and physically, she accepted the invitation.

A casual remark had called out the laugh as they

passed the railroad station, nothing more. And for this the man she loved had gone to Syria in utter wretchedness and dejection, and left her wearing out her heart for love of him and a consuming desire to see him! And this is life, and we are all playing at cross purposes in the same way, for lack of wisdom, and to gain the one desideratum, experience.

CHAPTER XVI.

Herbert Langley.—Recovered.—Brice in Pursuit of Margaret.

IF THE happenings of real life took as long as the telling of the story seems to make it to the impatient reader, it would seem long indeed to poor Herbert Langley lying on a sick bed in Warrington Hospital dangerously wounded, and quite unconscious; but fortunately he has been getting well all this time. The fever ran wildly a week and then gradually abated, but it was two weeks before the light of reason came to him, and four, before he could be removed to his home where we find him just previous to his sister's wedding, able to sit up, but still very much of an invalid.

The preparation for the wedding interested him, and he was more than glad to have Tom for a brother-in-law, but instinctively he felt that all was not right with him. He knew him so well, his face was like an open book to him, and yet nothing in his manner indicated where the trouble lay. His patience with Corinne's petulance made him feel that Tom must love her, and outwardly he could see no cause for his own feeling, but it troubled him nevertheless.

He was very happy to see the Stanleys at the wedding, and after the ceremonies were over, he carried them off to his own room to have a quiet talk.

He was much impressed with the change that had come to them all since he was their guest, and playfully rallied Rena upon her young-lady-hood, for she was only a girl when he was there, and he could hardly realize the change, and he inwardly set her down as a most beautiful and fascinating young woman. For by one of those contradictions that make men call women fickle, and not at all to be understood, she was in an unusually gay mood. Her effort to conceal her real feeling sent her spirits to the opposite point, and she was not only cheerful, but gay. Only Margaret understood her, and her heart ached for her when she should throw off her self-restraint.

They were obliged to wait for a late train, and Herbert had them all to himself, for every one else in the house was busy. Mr. and Mrs. Langley spent what time they could with them, and were profuse in their thanks for their kindness to Herbert. They were especially pleased with Rena, and the next morning Mr. Langley slyly hinted to Herbert that he should by no means object to that young lady for a daughter. Herbert accepted the suggestion seriously and made up his mind that when he was well he would do all he could to win Rena for his wife. But when Tom returned and he was plunging into business again, his mind was so fully occupied he lost sight of his idea for a time, and things went on as usual, his "Guardian Angel"

probably knowing that Rena was making a brave fight for freedom, and it would be useless to approach her then.

Indeed, she was brave. The undercurrent of her life was a constant struggle for self-restraint, and her often wakeful nights an interminable prayer for strength to endure.

As in all right effort, she succeeded. After awhile the struggle was not so hard, and she could forget Tom, or think of him as the husband of another. Her courage was rewarded and she grew calm and measureably resigned to the inevitable. She did not fade or mope, or lose her health. She was strong in herself and too proud to show her disappointment to the world. She knew that her acquaintances expected her to pine away and she did not propose to gratify them, and, sturdy little soul that she was, she did not.

There were now many interests in the place to occupy her mind and she entered into them with zest; she chattered and laughed and was gay as the gayest. If Tom had seen her he would have thought he had no need to borrow so much trouble about her. Margaret, on the contrary, was staid and distraught; she cared little for the gayeties and performed her duties in a sort of automatic way; she hardly knew how she got through with them, and she certainly did not care as long as she performed them faithfully, so she fell into the Brice trap quite easily and unconsciously. As he was most unobtrusive in his attentions, she never thought about him at all except when he was useful,

and only then while the necessity for utilizing him remained.

Her very impassiveness was his greatest hope. He felt sure he had no rival, and reasoned with himself that she could have no objections to him as long as she was so ready to make use of him.

Next to himself he loved her, and when their interests did not conflict, he was willing to do anything to make her happy.

He said in his talks with himself, "I'm for Uriel Brice every time, and she's got to come to me and serve me with her grand, regal ways. I shall enjoy all the better taking her high spirits down. There could be no pleasure in the chase if she did not hold herself so loftily." And he gloated over the picture when his time should come.

Now, that Mr. Gordon had gone and had made up his mind to stay away and was repulsing her psychologically, she was left unprotected from the assaults of the baser mind of him whose thoughts were always with her in all his waking hours, holding her to him, and, as his intense desire was to keep all other minds from perceiving his designs, he threw around her psychically an atmosphere that concealed from all others, as well as herself, his purpose.

Very little is understood of this power which is being exercised so commonly, more largely or perhaps strongly by men, because they are more positive on this plane. And the higher and more pure the woman's nature, the easier it is influenced, for she is looking

above and away from the real actuating motive behind the prevailing thought. Like the bird flying high in air, she does not see the concealed hunter waiting with murderous intent.

So the greatest villain, mentally, often captures the most high-minded woman. A woman on his own plane would penetrate his designs, and fight him with his own weapons.

But Brice was wary. Without understanding it himself, he was weaving his thought-images around Margaret, spreading his net closer and more close, and the unsuspecting girl was fast being bound in a net she could not break. Triumph for him was inevitable, could be but keep her unconscious until the right time came. And he held himself well poised and was determined to succeed.

Meantime he had his designs on the business, and while he was working to the best of his ability to build it up, he did it in such a way that when his plans matured, when he should get Margaret so in his power that she would lend herself to his interests, he could get the whole business in his own hands no matter at what loss to others concerned. It never occurred to him that she might possibly develop a mind of her own, she was so passive; and all his plans were made from that point of view.

CHAPTER XVII.

Amusements.—Festivities.—An Accident.—Margaret on Fire.—Rescued.—Her Trip to New York.—Brice Follows.—Margaret.—Goes South.—Returns to Bington.—Episode on the River-bank.—Brice's Trick.—Margaret Again Rescued.—All Is Not Fair in Love and War.—Sick Child.—They Meet.—Brice Proposes.—Margaret Considers.—Accepts.

AS WINTER approached there were fairs, sleigh rides, and many kinds of amusements on foot, and the young people at Mr. Burns' proposed to give a musicale to be followed by dancing and a general social time. Many invitations were issued, and the town was all agog with preparations. Dressmakers were working into the "wee sma hours" and many nimble pairs of fingers were busy at home making the pretty new frock that should adorn the fair wearer on that occasion.

At last the time came. Andrew opened the evening's entertainment with a short poetical recitation. The musical programme came after and was opened by a trio for piano, violin and cornet. Then followed a duet for piano and violin, after which Miss Burns sang a song, and so on for an hour, when the real festivities began.

All were breathless with expectation and happy at the success of each number; applause flowed freely

and pleasure held high carnival. The musical numbers were really fine, for the Burns family were accomplished musicians, and when at the close of the programme Papa Burns himself gave one of his inimitable Scotch songs in character, fun and mirth ran riot, and the house was almost literally brought down over their heads. Encore after encore followed until the "Star of the evening" was borne away in the arms of some of his young friends and deposited upon a couch in an adjoining room to recover his breath at leisure. But he was too vigorous and fun loving to remain long, and he raised another peal of laughter by taking a short cut another way, and being in the room when his "bearers" returned.

Then came the dancing, and all went well until amid the general hilarity a luckless individual overturned a lamp, the fire from which caught Margaret's dress. In an instant she was enveloped in flames. Only Brice had presence of mind to tear down one of the draperies and wrap the blazing woman in it, holding her tight in his arms until the flames were smothered. But he had found time in his fright—honestly enough to—murmur in her ear, "Oh, darling! O my life! What if you had been killed!" and then he released her and yielded himself to attention, for his hands were badly burned.

Fortunately Margaret escaped with little injury except her clothing and from fright. The refreshments were enjoyed in a much soberer mood than had prevailed, and amid dreadful thoughts of what might have been but for the presence of mind of Mr. Brice, who

they thought, would as a matter of course, risk his life to save Margaret. As his words were overheard, everyone took his heroic act as a matter of course.

Margaret herself scarce heeded the words and not until she was safely at home and divested of her burned clothing did the full import of them come to her. What a shock! Brice say that to her? Nonsense! She had never given him any liberty by thought or act to speak that way to her. How dare he?

Then came another shocking thought. He had saved her from an agonizing death and really took some risk with his own life; in fact, he was now suffering and she had come away without even thanking him. There was no excuse for this, how could she have been so thoughtless? It only served to show how little she thought about him anyway.

There is no woman who feels other than kindly towards a man who loves her; even a heartless coquette is gratified, and Margaret tried to be in this case. She saw that his fright was genuine, and she presumed his words were, but they filled her with disgust while she pitied him.

Could it be possible he had long loved her? She had never even thought of him except to tolerate him. Then little things cropped out from her memory to which she had paid no heed. How much they had been seen in public together! Certain remarks and allusions came to her mind that she had given no thought to, and his delicate, though pointed, attentions, until she was completely overwhelmed, and almost wished she had been burned to a crisp rather than saved under

such circumstances. And now she was under obligation to him and for her life! Any woman would know he would persist in his attentions after what had passed. What should she do? There was nothing for it but to send him a note of thanks and keep out of his way in the future, and so she settled it with herself and went to sleep.

The next morning she sent a note to Brice thanking him, and expressing her regrets for his injuries, and with the consent of the family, set out for New York to visit her aunt who had been pressing her to come. Before Brice could come to see her she was off, and determined to stay away until the whole affair was forgotten.

Before many days, Brice, who had made the most of his burns for effect, called at Mr. Stanley's and inquired for Margaret. Great was his chagrin to find she was gone. He had spent his idle days laying plans and he was impatient to carry them out, and he suspected the truth with regard to her going. He was determined not to be balked in his plans, but the only thing he could do was to possess himself in as much patience as he could command until she returned. But as the weeks went by and there was no sign of her return, he grew impatient, and to add to his troubles he became frantically jealous.

"What if she had fallen in love with one of those New York dudes! She would not stay so long unless there was some reason. Those city fellows would pick up such a girl as she pretty quick," he thought. She did not love him he very well knew, and a girl was

always caught by a city fellow. She wasn't staying there all this time for nothing. The longer he thought about it the more alarmed he became, and he resolved to go to New York and find out for himself. He procured leave of absence for a few days and went to New York. He called at Mr. Stanley's and inquired for Margaret, but she was not at home and no one knew when she would be in. He found enough to do to occupy him until the next day when he called at a different hour, but the servant said she was unable to see anyone. He shut his teeth hard, but sent up his card, asking what time he could see her tomorrow. Her aunt came down to say they were to leave the city in the early morning for a trip to the South to be absent indefinitely. She brought Miss Stanley's regrets that he came in so unfortunate a time, and a message to her brother with which the persistent suitor was obliged to be content.

The shock to Margaret of his presence there was so great it made her really ill, and filled her with terror. She began to understand his persistence and a great fear overtook her lest she could not escape him. Was it a premonition? She could not tell. She was so unnerved her aunt planned the little trip for her diversion.

Margaret's repugnance for Brice was now mixed with fear, she could not tell why. She dreamed about him, and in her dreams he was always clutching for her with the most sardonic grin upon his face, and she only just escaped him. However, when they were out of New York she became more tranquil, and as new

things came up to take her attention she gradually lost the fear and became herself again. Yet her intuition enabled her to feel his plottings and gave her a dim sort of comprehension of them.

Woman's intuition is given her for her protection in just such cases, but our knowledge of the psychic world is so limited, we do not always know how to interpret our impressions; besides the materialistic lives we live bury us deep under their debris, and we only "see through a glass darkly" what is meant to be to us clear as the light of day. There are no secrets in nature, "all who run may read." All mind is One, and in the soul realm every soul sees every other soul face to face. What one knows, all may know, but we repulse our souls when they would warn us, and accept only what our physical senses enforce upon us, generally speaking. Only those who obey the call and listen to the "still small voice" can read the sounds from the Eternal.

Margaret's soul was alive to her danger now and she fled from it in horror. Brice was furious and cursed his bad luck. He accused fate of an attempt to balk him and swore to himself he would win her, fate or no fate.

Some weeks elapsed and Margaret had found her equilibrium; the terror and dread had left her, but the repugnance remained. The invisible cord that held her, through his thought, was there, had never been broken, yet it was less in her sight; it did not seem so tense, she had become accustomed to it.

Unfortunately she could not remain away always,

the time came when she must go home. She thought she understood herself now and was safe; she resolved to avoid Brice so pointedly he would understand what she meant and would keep his distance. Alas! She did not know the man. He quickly saw she avoided and disliked him, but the more he was foiled the more mental energy he put into his purpose.

He kept constant watch over her movements, as she saw, but outwardly he was most unobtrusive and neither sought nor avoided her. He paid no attention to any other woman except such as could not be avoided, and it was a carefully studied part of his plan that society should not understand the state of affairs between them.

As time passed and he made no farther advances, Margaret's fears were allayed and her vigilance relaxed. She thought he had understood her intention and accepted the inevitable. How little did she know of the persistent energy men put into their pursuit of women.

She had taken to going off by herself to a secluded but very delightful nook on the river bank with her book and her thoughts, spending in that way, many tranquil hours. At such times her mind flew to Mr. Gordon on his distant journey and wandered with him in the wilds of thought among his savage surroundings.

Brice discovered her retreat, and frequently went to watch her as she sat there, but with great care that she should not see him. He contrived, however, to be seen by others and that it should appear there had been a lover's meeting.

One afternoon he followed her, taking with him a large dog belonging to a friend. He carefully planned his position, and threw a small pebble for the dog into the river, Bruno bounding after it, full tilt. Margaret hearing a rushing sound, looked up from her book in time to see a savage looking dog with mouth agape coming toward her at full speed. She sprang to her feet taking a step forward as she did so and slipped on a rolling stone that caused her to lose her balance and plunge toward the river which ran close under the steep bank upon which she sat. She would have fallen into the rapidly running waters had not a pair of strong arms seized her, drawing her back and holding her in a close embrace.

She was much frightened, and could not gain her self-control for a moment or escape. While she was held in the fellow's arms with her face close to his and he was saying, as it appeared, involuntarily, "My angel! Again, again you are saved!" his propitious fate sent a boat-load of people sailing down the river in full sight of them, and Margaret struggled out of his arms to see the laughing faces of her own friends, who put their own construction upon what they saw, and waved their hands and cheered in great glee.

Margaret's indignation knew no bounds. She turned upon her tormentor to vent her anger and met so humble and abashed a look and such profuse apologies that she had nothing to say. "I am sure, Miss Stanley, they must have seen you fall," he was saying, "and knew why I held you. I was so startled at seeing that immense dog making for you, and then you fell; what

could a man do? I could not let you go into the river!"

Then she was forced to thank him and be ashamed of herself, for he really looked pale and troubled, and she could not refuse to sit down as he suggested, for she was trembling like a leaf, or allow him to, for the same reason. He was much disturbed, fearing he had spoiled his chances, she was so indignant. He took the remote end of the seat and left her to recover herself, and he seemed in every way so thoughtful of her that she began to think she was too barbarous and unjust to him, especially as she could give herself no reason for her feeling of abhorrence. It was only that she felt an utter repugnance to him that she could neither describe nor explain. She realized he was a man and could not be blamed for being susceptible to a woman's charms, and (outwardly) he was gentlemanly and had done her nothing but kindness. She must not allow herself to be so unjust and unreasonable, so she tried to speak kindly to him and be grateful for his opportune presence. His (inward) satisfaction knew no bounds. To find himself alone and on good terms with her was almost more than his self-restraint was equal to, but he made a strong effort, and was so thoughtful and delicate in his treatment of her that she really felt softened towards him.

After he saw she was fully restored he left her, bending low over her hand in a tremor of emotion too strong to be concealed.

He was so elated and happy over the success of his experiment he could hardly walk. He felt more like

flying, and if the old saying is true that, "All is fair in love and war," well he might feel so.

But it is not true. It is *not* fair for a man to pursue a woman who has no natural affinity for him, and when his only motive is his own personal aggrandizement. He did not love her for her sake, but for his own, for the use he could make of her in his home and business life, to help build him up; and her good or happiness was not considered at all. Men too often forget that the women they seek are living beings with souls and highly sensitive organizations that suffer intensely from their careless treatment, to say nothing of real abuse. May the spirit of Good forgive men for all they have made women suffer *needlessly*.

Many women do wrong and are wicked, but when it is carefully traced, it is sure to go back to some ancestor of depraved habits or to some man who has abused or betrayed them. The first cause is necessarily with the earthly element, represented by the male. Shall we blame the man? As well ask if we shall blame the cat that plays with and tortures the mouse. Cats must eat. Their nature is to be cruel, they are thinking of themselves and not of the mouse. Exactly! That is the way with men. Women as a class take their cue from men. But are we all animals? Man has evolved *self consciousness* and it is that which places him above animals. He knows he is cruel and what it means to be cruel; he can enter into and understand the feelings of a person well or cruelly treated, there lies his responsibility. He has not the right to be cruel that a cat has; he knows better, he does not like to be cruelly

treated himself, and resents it with all his strength. It remained for "The Christ" to give the rule of conduct. "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." How many men do this by women? I have heard men say they had rather be anything than a woman. Why? Only because women are slaves, with as God-given a right to be free as man.

Margaret's resistance once broken she began to think better of Brice. Outwardly no fault could be found with him. If only the creepy feeling would go away, something that made her think of snakes.

If any feeling predominated in Margaret's mind it was a strong sense of justice and she could not reconcile her conscience to the way she felt toward Brice, so she resolved to try to see his good qualities, not with any thought of marrying him, oh, no! only to be just to him.

Much to her annoyance and chagrin she was subject to the mischievous jokes of her boating friends, and the more she attempted to explain, the harder they laughed, and she learned to her great consternation that she was considered to be engaged to Brice. As she looked back into the past year or so, she saw how it might be possible, and while she denied it and did her best to counteract the impression, unconsciously to herself her mind became familiar with the idea. Its utter absurdity, as far as she was concerned, still farther disarmed her.

Her feeling for Mr. Gordon, her real lover, had rather intensified than lessened. His lonely wanderings could not assuage his pain, and personal absence

drew them together on the psychic plane. Though both were ignorant of the laws that governed that side of life, they were none the less answering to those laws in spite of themselves, and this underlying feeling that she could not account for or understand, held her to the determination not to marry. She loathed the thought of it since he was gone.

Meantime Brice was gaining ground in the community and with his employers. He was much respected and was coming to be one of the solid men of the town. The business, too, was increasing and his employers knew that he was largely instrumental in their success and advanced him accordingly. His outward life was spotless. She could find no fault with him. Brice had lost sight of his first motives as he advanced in his business, and as fair means seemed adequate to carry out his plans. His intense love for Margaret was purifying him, he was raised toward her level in spite of himself.

His love was getting the better of him with the little encouragement he had had. He was sure he could not wait much longer, his longing to be with her was so strong. He met her here and there in society and she certainly was more kind, and his hopes continued to rise.

Again fate came to his aid. The little child of a poor woman in whom people were much interested, was taken ill with croup. Word was sent to Margaret who immediately went to help and comfort the afflicted mother, who was a widow, and this child her all. Its

sufferings were great and the mother was beside herself with grief.

Brice hearing of it, also went to her assistance, this time without knowing Margaret was there. He was so tender and gentle, Margaret's gratitude was earned, and when he held the little child in his strong arms and the thankful dying eyes sought his and trusted him to help her into the Beyond, Margaret for the first time felt admiration for the man; and after the little life had gone out and the last sad offices were performed, the mother left in kindly hands, they walked home in the early dawn, the most sacred and tender feelings of both were awakened and he told her the story of his patient love, and she, overborne by her gentle sadness and the influences of the hour, promised to think over his proposition and in a week give him her answer. At this time the very best of his nature was uppermost, his love was earnest and honest, it needed no simulation, and his mental atmosphere was as pure as from his nature it could be. This affected Margaret very strongly, her repugnance to him was abated because there was nothing in his mind to antagonize her.

But at the best her thoughts were agonizing. Marriage with Brice was entire separation from Gordon. She had not thought she had any hope of anything else, but when she came face to face with the idea, she found, much to her astonishment, that a hope still lingered there that she should see him again and perhaps they would become friends.

This she did not like after a man had so far forgotten himself as he had with no cause on her part for

anger, and then gone off on a foreign tour without as much as an attempt at a reconciliation. Where was her pride that she should for a moment desire such a renewal? She would marry this man, she would conquer this feeling, she was sure she should overcome it if she had interest in another, and her duties as a wife to sustain her. From a worldly point of view nothing was wanting, and we must remember Margaret did not see and know what we do of the subtleties of the case. She resolved to be honest with him and tell him she did not love him, but if he still wished to marry her she would consent.

All the week Brice was in such a state of excitement and anxiety as he would not have thought himself capable of, and when he went to get his answer, his trepidation was overpowering. He walked the street up and down before he could screw his courage to the point of going in, for now the tables were turned. Margaret was calm and firm, but he was weak as a little child. He finally mustered courage to ring the bell and soon was ushered into Margaret's presence.

She received him with kindness and calmly told him she could not give him her love, she had given that elsewhere long ago, but she never expected to see the man she had loved, again, and if she was sure he would be happier with her as she was, she would do as much as she could to make him a good wife.

It was a terrible disappointment to him, he had been so sure she was free, but his whole being was set towards her and had been so long, he could not turn. Have her he must. He would be so kind and tender

of her she could not help but love him, he longed for her, and a home of his own in which she should be the presiding genius; he could only say he accepted her gladly as she was and was sure he could make her love him because he would be so tender of her, and his love was so great she must return it in time. So arrangements for a speedy marriage were made. If Margaret could have analyzed her mind, as we can, she would have found, much to her surprise, that she was in feverish haste to have it over for fear she should, in spite of herself, not be able to carry out her resolution. She had no idea what she was risking and was only buoyed up to her present state of mind by her indignant and somewhat revengeful thoughts towards Mr. Gordon. She would show him she was not wasting her life for him, there were others that could appreciate her if he did not!

Only through this weakness in her character could Brice win his point. A perfect character could not be touched by an imperfect one. It is only by some latent weakness in us that the imperfect mind can reach us; there must be some peg to fasten the telegraphic wire upon; Margaret's was pride. Brice's less developed and so lower mind had caught on to this weak point as being the only one in sympathy with him, and at the last moment it had developed to carry out his purpose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Margaret Married.—Old Feelings Renewed.—Wedding Trip.
—Home Again.—Uncle Eben.—A Year Passed.—Brice's
Happiness.

MARGARET was married. The wedding took place very quietly much to the chagrin of Brice who would have liked great display, but she would not have it so, and consoling himself with the thought that he would soon have things his own way, he yielded, reckoning without his host, however, for Margaret with her eyes open was not as easily moulded as he expected.

The first touch of the man as they sped toward the station in the carriage alone awoke the old antagonism afresh in Margaret's mind. The change in his mind and the feeling that he was sure of her, and she was entirely in his power, pierced her like a knife. She could no longer stand on her dignity and keep him at arm's length. She belonged to him now and as that thought swept over her, she involuntarily made a movement to open the carriage door and escape, but she caught herself in time and battled with what seemed to her a most unreasonable feeling.

He did not know, of course, that his thoughts had reached her; he considered himself secure with them unexpressed and thought he kept his own secrets. Had he been told that all the mentality of the universe

knew it (because all mind is One) and all minds of his class could pick it out and possess it if they understood the law, he would have considered it an evidence of insanity. "Truth is stranger than fiction," and it behooves us to think only such thoughts as we would be willing to have known. This is the secret of clairvoyance. The "seer" reads from the *One* mind.

We will draw a veil over Margaret's bridal trip. Many a woman who reads this can imagine it. Had she realized what it meant to be owned and have to merge her will into that of a person repulsive to her, she would have drowned herself first.

A new and very pretty house had been fitted up for them and when they returned at the end of three weeks everything was ready for them. A tidy maid had been installed and the family were there to receive them. An exquisite repast had been prepared under Rena's supervision. The house was profusely decorated with flowers.

When they left the cars at the station garrulous Uncle Eben who had discoursed of Margaret to Mr. Gordon stood on the platform eagerly looking at Margaret. After he had caught a glimpse of her face he turned away muttering to himself, "There, dang it! I knew how t'would be,—she looks like a lily thet's bin froze stiff'n jest thawed out 'nuff to look wilted. Dang him! I d'now but she looks more like a little bird thet's bin crushed by a snake. He jest charmed her es a snake duz 'nd swaller'd her hull afterward. He's most killed her'n he'll finish her ef suthin ain't dun. I'll fix 'im yit!" and he doubled up his fist and shook it

at him and went pegging slowly up the street, while the newly wedded pair entered their carriage and were driven rapidly home.

Margaret was making great effort to appear happy. She attributed her dull looks to the fatigue of travel and was as cheerful as she possibly could be with the darkest of shadows hanging over her life. Poor Margaret! But how many women have trodden the path before you!

She was glad to get home and to feel she was not alone with her husband. Their trip had been pleasant and he had been supremely happy and most kind in his way and she appreciated it. If she could only get over the personal repugnance she felt for him; to be caressed by him was intolerable. As long as he was away from her it seemed not so hard, but he thought he could only win her by persistent attentions and lavished upon her all the care and personal endearments he thought would be so agreeable to her, and they certainly were to him. And she tried for her own sake, as well as his, to like him. She supposed newly married women generally felt as she did, and managed to accept his attentions without being offensive. But in spite of herself she seemed to him cold and distant. He, too, thought it was because she was as yet strange to him and that it would not be so always, and he did not see that a woman, forced to marry a man, cannot be forced to love him, neither can she force herself. Both of them tried to console themselves by thinking it would all come right in time.

Life sped on with them. A year had passed. They

had become somewhat adjusted to each other and found much to admire, and some things that were not so admirable in each other, as all married people do. Margaret practically overcame her repugnance to him, and had she not loved Mr. Gordon and been constantly called towards him by his thought dwelling upon her, she might in time have learned to feel affection for her husband, for he was always kind in his way, and tried to make her love him. He was happy in his home, for Margaret made it most delightful, and he had never known before what home life was. His mother had done the best she could for him, and boarding houses, not always first-class, had been his lot since. The quiet elegance, the cheerfulness and brightness of his own home, was a constant delight to him, even when he had learned that his wife did not love him, there was so much improvement in his life, so much added to his comfort in every way, he was quite contented and happy, and tried not to miss what he so much wished for,—Margaret's love. But her stately beauty was his, whether she liked it or not, and he gloried in it, and made the most of what happiness he had.

She never for a day or an hour forgot Mr. Gordon any more than she forgot to breathe. He was a part of her life, but she did not recognize that. The pulsations of her soul responded to his as the steel does to the magnet, unconsciously. It was the resistance of his soul in their psychic life, to Brice's possession of her, that kept Margaret always on the rack, and helped to bring out Brice in his proper light. The psychological phase of our existence is so little understood

that the happenings of our everyday life puzzle and confound us, when they are perfectly simple and natural, if rightly understood. Brice was yet in his heaven, which was Margaret's pure atmosphere, and it made another man of him. He was satisfied, and there was nothing to bring to the surface his baser qualities or tempt him.

CHAPTER XIX.

Corinne Ill.—Death.—Confession.—Promises.—Tom Visits
Rena.—Revelation.—Wedding Day Appointed.

IN THE year that had passed, great changes had come in Tom's life. Corinne, who was always delicate, had sown the seeds of her restless and unreasonable temper, in her mind, and the effects of such sowing were showing themselves in her body, which is nature's way of expressing her law, and she was rapidly fading away, burning her candle of life at both ends, and her days were numbered and few, with her husband and friends. Tom had been most devoted to her and she had literally lived on his strong magnetic nature. He was by her side night and day, sometimes holding her as he would a little child, lifting her, administering her medicines, and doing all the little things an invalid requires, for she would have no one else; and so he watched the young life go out and the frail body yield to the spirit that was overcoming it. Her querulousness was all gone now; she lay in a state of exhaustion, her great, spiritual-looking eyes following Tom whichever way he turned, with the yearning of her whole soul in them, and a wistfulness that was very harrowing to him. She wished to say something to him but seemed not to have the courage.

One day, however, she felt stronger, and beckoned

him to sit beside her. Laying her little, delicate hand in his great strong palm, she drew him close to her and said: "Tom dear, you have been so good to me, so patient! Lying here, I have had time to think it all over and see things as they are. I am very near to the other shore, my beloved, and when one gets so close to the margin of the river, Tom, the light from the spirit side makes everything clear, and I can see something I want to tell you. I want you to remember that I appreciated all your noble self-denial, all your devotion to a little girl you did not love. You have been so patient, dear, you have tried so hard to cover your feelings and appear to give me all the love I craved. You have made my life all happiness as far as my restless nature could be happy, and I did not perceive the truth until lately, when it came to me that I could not stay here with you long. But one day as I awoke from a heavier sleep than usual, a beautiful angel stood before me, calm, serene, and smiling, and told me they wanted me in the Happy Land, and that I must let go of you and be willing to go. And when I cried out for you and said I could not, she took me back to the night on the veranda when I thought you told me you loved me, and she showed me—Oh, Tom! how can I tell you?—But she showed me that when you told me how you should feel if you loved, you were not thinking of me at all, as I supposed you were, because I loved you so, Tom dear. I did not want it any other way. But she told me you were not thinking of me at all, but of Rena Stanley, whom you had known and loved all your life.

"I thought I should die right then, darling; but the sweet, kind angel gave me strength, and I thought it all over and knew it was true; and if I had not been so blind through my infatuation for you, I must have seen it from the first.

"Now, dear, I must tell you all. I had made up my mind I would get you to propose that night and had made a plan to get you into that corner and lead up to the subject, and when you so readily fell into my trap, I was, oh, so happy! I did not think whether I was mistaken or not; in fact, I do not think I should have let you off if I had. I was so inexperienced, and so determined in my wilfulness to have you.

"But the good angel showed me many things, and I saw why I could not stay with you. And now my own! my own! for you are mine yet, I want you to promise me something. Will you, dear?"

"Yes, Corinne, my dear little girl, I will promise to do anything you wish, if I can, if it will make you happier."

"Oh, it will make me happier, Tom, it will! I could not rest up there with the beautiful angels, unless you did, and I shall be happy, oh, so happy! for the angel showed it to me. If you are only happy here, and I can make up to you and Rena all these years I have had you to myself when you belonged to her.

"After I have gone to my happiness, I want you to tell Rena all I have told you and ask her to take my place and forgive me. Tell her it is my wish, and if the dear angels will let me, I will come to you after you are together, as the beautiful angel came to me, and show

you how glad I am that you are really happy at last. And Tom, if you could live here at home as you do now until they all get over missing me, I should be so glad. Oh, Tom! if you really could! but I shall not make you promise that, though I want it so much.

“Now, hold me close in your arms, dearest, close, for I am so tired.” And he gathered her up and held her close and she fell asleep.

He was so filled with conflicting emotions, so torn with anguish on the one side and joy on the other, so shaken from the very depths of his nature, he did not notice when the faint breath stopped, or see the blessed angel that bore her to her Happy Land.

When her mother entered the room a little later, they discovered the tired body was left behind, the freed spirit had flown, and they were bereaved.

Thy laid her away amid beautiful flowers, and when they questioned him of her last moments, he told them the pathetic story, amid many tears, but with rejoicings for the faith that had made her last hours so happy.

It was many months before Tom dared to go home to Rena, and these months were filled with many sad thoughts of the tender young life that had come to such an untimely close. Corinne had lovely traits of character, and the unlovely ones were those of temperament for which she was not to blame, and not those of a bad heart. The restlessness and self-love were the blots on an otherwise lovely character. Her education, or want of it, on those points must take the blame, not she.

She was sadly missed, and not the least of all by

Tom; for who can spend so much patient kindness upon any one, and not learn to love her?

But now he was free, and urged by the family, he went home to lay before Rena the story of his marriage. The day was bright and beautiful, the atmosphere was soft and warm, the birds sang merrily, and all nature was budding into new life in the lovely spring time, and Tom's heart sang with joy as the train crept along towards his heart's desire, for though it was a fast express it was all too slow for his eager thoughts.

His journey terminated in due time, and he was once again among his native hills. He could hardly curb his impatience long enough to go home, but he did so, and as soon as dinner was dispatched, he turned his steps toward the Stanleys. His thoughts flew, and his feet did their best to keep pace with them, for he was very doubtful about his fate. Rena was now somewhat older in years, and much older in experience, and he feared her mind had totally changed with the circumstances. He knew it was a great shock to her when he married, and she had so long been under the impression that he was a dishonest man, untrue to himself and to her, she might not accept the story, or if she did, the love she had for him might have been killed; but he knew her to be so steadfast and faithful, he hoped she was not changed past recall, and he might yet be a happy man and be able to make amends for all he had made her suffer.

Arrived at the house, he sought Rena whom he had not seen since his marriage, and poured out his story and heart to her. But she did not speak, sitting in

stony silence, deathly pale and with no response, only silence; not even an encouraging look. "My little girl," he pleaded, "cannot you forgive and forget this most unhappy past and give your love and yourself to your childhood's friend? I cannot remember the time when you did not seem to belong to me, until this sad mistake occurred. You are a part of my life; you have grown up with my thoughts and moulded them to your own sweet will. My love for you has made me what I am. I always held myself pure, I honored all women for your sake. I tried to live the life you would have me. You were ever present in my thought, and you will not let the mistake of poor, innocent Corinne come between us? Can you not see how much I suffered in doing what I knew you would think right? You will not blight my life again? O, Rena, my darling! I could not bear it to have to give you up again!"

But she was cold and unresponsive. She could not gather herself so soon. She would not have been human, had she not, after Corinne's transition, thought of the possibility of Tom's returning to her, now his business success was assured, and the object for which he married attained. But she felt such a repugnance to such a course of action, it seemed so base to her, she could not think for a moment of renewing their old relations. Much as she loved him, even now, her sense of right and wrong was so keen that she could not easily forgive or forget; and over all was the terrible disappointment of finding the man she had revered and worshipped, so utterly base as to sell himself for money and forsake her. This had cut her

the sharpest of all. No! she said to herself, I would not accept his love; the charm has gone. Her idol was shattered forever.

But although she had listened coldly to his story, the aspect of things was changed. The closed doors of her heart were opened, but they did not swing wide apart. It was not in her nature to change quickly when she had spent the whole force of her being closing and locking the doors of her mind against him, and she could not turn to him again all at once, and flood him with love and sunshine. She was too strong a character, too self-poised; it had taken her quite too long to close those doors. For a long time little rays of light would, in spite of her, creep in through the crevices of her mind, and yet the one, dull, dismal fact stared her in the face; he was married to Corinne and it could not be changed, whether he loved her or not. Finally she overcame her pain, locked the door of her mind, and threw the key away, and now it was not easy to find it. She had only come to the point of willingness to try, when she should be sure of the morning lights being pure and strong.

She sat with her hands folded idly in her lap, looking down upon them until the recital was finished, and Tom's passionate appeal was ended.

"Won't you understand how it was Rena?" said Tom in despair. "Will you not forgive what I could not help? Can you not love me now when I have shown you all my grief? Can it be too late? Have mercy, O, my lone star among women, shine once again for me; have I not suffered enough? You cannot be so cruel!

Do you not see I loved you enough to be willing you should suffer for what I thought you would consider right? Not willing! No, oh, my heart! I could never willingly see you suffer for anything, but I had such confidence in your high sense of honor, I thought you would prefer it, and I was glad to think you were so high, and I could trust you to suffer for what was right. Do you not see, my dear love, how I must have loved you to have trusted you so much? Speak to me Rena! I cannot bear it! Have I quite broken your poor heart? Did I count too much on your strength? It was a terrible ordeal, I know. Then you did love me, didn't you, sweet? You seemed to be always mine."

But she was paralyzed. She could neither look up nor speak. The shock of joy was greater than that of pain in the days of her bitter disappointment. She had to call up all the force of her nature to withstand it. Now she had only to be passive and receive the new joy, and she could not. She thought she was dying; and her body swayed to one side, and she fell in a swoon. Tom caught her in time to save her from falling, and his warm clasp broke the spell; and she wept and sobbed as does Dame Nature after a long drouth when the springs are all lapped up by the burning heat, and the earth throbs in wild despair in its desire to escape the merciless sun that is burning its life away.

Tom understood; and he soothed and petted her as would a mother her hurt child, until finally the

paroxysm was over, and she was utterly exhausted. Then he laid her upon the couch and left her to the kindly offices of sleep, which he knew must come after such a breaking-up. He felt satisfied now, and saw with consternation how terrible had been her trial, and how courageously she had borne it.

After he left the room, he went in search of Mrs. Stanley to whom he told the story, and from her he learned much that enlightened him as to Rena's state of mind.

He then went home and retold his thrilling tale to his own family, after which he felt that he was himself again. He had taken the part of the unprincipled knave long enough in his role of life, and was glad to be once more recognized as an honest man. His relief was immense.

Later he went again to see Rena, and now found her all his heart desired.

"Oh, Tom dear," she said, "I thought I should die of the joy of knowing you were my own honest Tom. It was quite too much after the long, dreary months in which I had to think such bad thoughts of you. Now you are wholly mine; and I will hold you always, and never let you go again," and she twined her arms about his neck and pressed her throbbing lips to his in perfect freedom and complete confidence.

Happy Tom! this was compensation, indeed! And now, when? He could not wait for her long, he said. Time enough had been lost from out their lives—they must be together.

But mother and Margaret must be consulted before that could be decided. So a conference meeting was held, and two months reluctantly given by impatient Tom. Then he went back to report his pleasant news, and receive the congratulations of all the Langley family.

CHAPTER XX.

Brice's State of Mind.—A New Bookkeeper.—Failure.—Villainy.—Brice Gets Business.—Confidential with Bookkeeper.—Jealousy.—Plottings.—Arrest.—Counterplots.—Bribes.—Margaret Suspicious.—Change in Home Life.—Retrospection.—Bad News.—Forgot Law.—Adventure.—Sickness.—Death.

MATTERS had moved along in an even manner with Margaret and Brice. She loved him no better but tolerated him with a very good grace. She certainly was not happy, neither was she really miserable. Her home was pleasant for she made it so; and she had, apparently, everything to make her comfortable. But the one, great longing was ever there, much as she tried to ignore it.

Brice was disappointed. Margaret was more superior, every way, than he anticipated. She was to him so much more beautiful, grand and lovable, that she gave him far greater happiness than he had looked for, but she had no place in her mind for any of his little pet schemes for his own aggrandizement, as he plainly saw. He might as well appeal to one of the calm, bright stars, with a scheme for getting money under false pretenses. She shone too high.

He knew he never could make her understand him, and the old, ambitious hunger for money and power

was on him again. He wanted money for her. To see her shine in gorgeous raiment, with a liveried coach, and to surround her with the riches of India would be his pleasure; but in order to do that he must make money, and legitimate business methods were too slow for him. His scheming brain began to work, and a mind like his never thinks of building up without first tearing down. To build his own fortunes he must break down some other man's.

His first plan was to get hold of the factory, oust Andrew and his partner and get the business into his own hands; then enlarge it, and strike out in new paths by methods all his own that he had long contemplated. This he hoped to do and keep his good name and position, and also keep from Margaret all knowledge of his iniquity, for he valued her good opinion more than all others.

He had shown so much capacity for the business, that a woman book-keeper was procured, and he was brought more into the active management of the firm. Many ways were now open to him that his prolific brain could make use of. But in order to carry out his schemes he must have a woman's help, and since Margaret's aid was impossible he must have some one's else, therefore, he chose the new book-keeper, Miss Deming. She was a short, dark woman about thirty years old; honest enough, but capable of being influenced in dishonest directions if it seemed to her interest. He began by expressing great admiration for her business methods, and as a second step, used the only means a man knows, made love to her. He thus

secured her entire cooperation, and the two together planned and executed a most atrocious scheme that ruined Andrew and his partner, and left the scoundrel in such a position that he could buy for a song the whole plant, and conduct it alone.

The business methods and good standing of the former firm soon put them on their feet again, and created a competition young Brice had not counted on. This necessitated more risks than he had desired to take, but now he was in the swim, he must go with the tide. Besides, he trusted to his natural ability to bring circumstances around to fit his needs, and he worked on with confidence, also keeping up the part of humanitarian he was playing in the community and at home.

Margaret was entirely unsuspecting, but she was conscious of a change of feeling toward her husband. She could not tell why, but you, dear reader, know that when he took into his life another woman, he also took her thought atmosphere, for she was nearer his own crafty level. This changed him for the worse without his knowledge, as much as he had changed for the better when he married Margaret; and the new combination jarred on Margaret's sensitive nature. She merely tolerated him before, now she had hard work not to hate him. He looked differently to her now. The mental combination of Deming and Brice was cunning and jealous, dissimulating and crafty, and she could not feel comfortable in such an atmosphere. She dreaded to have him at home; the sound of his voice startled and distressed her; but she bore it as well as she could, and sought her happiness with her

family and friends, and tried to lighten the lives of others who had burdens to carry as well as she.

A man once started on the wrong road is liable to keep going farther and farther astray, and Brice fell a victim to the fascinations of another young woman. Miss Deming, whose lynx eyes could not be easily blinded, became aware of the fact, and her jealousy being aroused, she began to plot for his destruction after the precedent he had established. Then, too, she had always been jealous of Margaret, who held the position she desired, and whose high-toned ways she could not abide, and she was quite ready to see the wife disgraced and brought low.

The girl made it so uncomfortable for Brice with her jealousies and antagonisms, that he was cross and surly, and had hard work to carry himself with any equanimity at home, though he still loved Margaret and wished to make everything smooth for her. But the avenger was at hand; Brice's time had come; and one morning he was called upon by an officer of justice and apprehended in the name of the law for the crime of forgery, and taken off to jail.

It was an entire surprise to him; but when he remembered that he had had a serious quarrel with Miss Deming within a week, he knew what it meant and how impossible it was to escape from her vindictiveness, unless he changed his tactics. Then he began to counterplot. An open break would be fatal; he could only win her over by deceiving her; but he was good at that. He procured bail at once, and immediately set to work to learn how much she had told. He bought a

handsome set of diamonds and took them to her as a gift. The pair had a long interview, and he promised her a sum of money beyond her wildest dreams (knowing he should never pay it) and promised to dismiss his other book-keeper who was the second love. He helped her to another situation, also giving her handsome jewels to fix the matter up.

Then he and the Deming concocted a story of the charge being made for purposes of blackmail. They altered figures, and fixed accounts to prove his honesty, and because of his good standing in the community, he was acquitted. Then he took up the role of martyr. This all took place within a week, and most fortunately while Margaret was on a visit and shopping expedition to New York. She was so much occupied she did not look at the papers and failed to see it. When she reached home, Brice himself told her the story, with all necessary embellishments, holding himself up as a Christian martyr.

It was, he said, because he was so prominent in philanthropic work in the town, and had won the ill will of some one whom he had thwarted in wrong doing.

The unsuspecting wife accepted his version then; however, after-thought awakened her to further search into his private life outside of home. Her aversion to him was increasing, and she did not believe in his innocence. She could not wholly conceal her distrust of him, and he was quick to perceive it.

This galled him terribly, for there were many others in the community who were not backward in showing

their distrust of him, and to have Margaret, of all others, suspicious of him (though she said nothing openly) made him cross and vindictive. She had been his anchor. But now that he felt that she knew him as he was, in her own mind, his conduct towards her was sullen and brutal; and he quite forsook his kindly manners and seemed to make a point of irritating and annoying her in all possible ways.

This was hard for her to bear, especially as she had no love for him to sustain her through such a trial. She still bore it as well as she could, but often gave a sharp answer to his unmanly sallies, and grew irritable herself under the strain. Few of us are angels yet, and Margaret was very human. Brice's home paradise was now changed to the opposite condition. He was much away and had all he could do to keep his place in society.

The influence of the women he sought was debasing to him, and while keeping up a fair exterior, his inner life was a hell from which he had no escape or respite. Margaret found her life so unbearable that she threatened to go home to her father's house, and Brice was brought to desperate straits. He was in a constant quarrel with Miss Deming who held a power over him that might any day be turned against him; and to add to all this, his financial affairs were going wrong, and the whole state of the case was most desperate.

One gloomy day he sat alone in his private office trying to look the situation in the face. He contrasted the first two years of his married life when he was happy and his home life so pleasant, with the last two

years of turmoil and strife. He tried to see how it all had come about. He analyzed all the causes that had led up to it and cursed the false ambition that had been at the bottom of it all. His mind seemed to be cleared for the purpose of this retrospection, and he saw plainly that all blame lay with himself. He was not only the "spider" but the "fly" that had been caught in the web of circumstances of his own weaving.

His state of mind might perhaps be imagined but not described. He was in deepest dejection and gloom, and he resolved that as fast as he could he would work himself out of his trouble, forsake his evil ways, win Margaret back again and live a new life; and he decided to turn over a new leaf, be a man again and—Live!

His good resolutions did not last long. He could not overcome his natural inclination. He thought he knew his power, and was sure he could get out all right, and it would almost be impossible to break away from everything. As for Margaret, it was her own fault. If she was not so cross and unreasonable, he was sure he would be different. She was cold as an iceberg, and she held herself so high and so much better than other people—well, it was more fun to be with "the girls." He did not care whether he was right or wrong, it was enough pleasanter. He did not remember that when he was living right, he found pleasure in his wife's society.

He now reasoned that what a wife was for, was to take care of the house and his clothes and look after her husband's interests generally. That was what he

married her for, and he would not spoil his pleasures for her.

He had, however, given his soul a glimpse of himself, and he knew it would hold him responsible. Soon some one came in, and he was plunged deep in business again.

This visitor brought news that made Brice shiver, and he went out and made over his property to his wife, and kept his own counsel, for he saw disaster and ruin before him unless he could make some quick move to save himself. He did not intend to be left destitute if he had to give up his business and have nothing to begin a new life with. Fortunately for him the disaster was averted, and circumstances so shaped themselves that his affairs were soon in a better condition than before. This gave him confidence in himself again and renewed his courage.

He had become so lax in his methods of business he had quite overlooked the fact that there was any such thing as a law outside of his own desire.

He had been reminded of it now, and he was likely to move with more caution. His great fear was Miss Deming; he was never sure what she would do next. She had grown more importunate, and now demanded money, threatening exposure if she did not get it. She had learned that the dismissal of the other book-keeper was only a blind to herself and she never trusted him, no matter what he said. He knew that her jealousy might lead her to any lengths and he was always uneasy about her.

He was on his way home late one night, and in the

outskirts of the town, when a wild-eyed, red-faced man sprang out of the thicket, and, seizing him by the throat bore him to the ground. A desperate struggle ensued from which he finally succeeded in extricating himself, when his antagonist, panting and desperate, instead of renewing the attack, turned and ran, climbing the fence and fleeing across the fields towards a piece of dense woods. Brice watched him a few minutes, then finding no harm had come to him except torn and soiled clothing, he pursued his way homeward, wondering what could have possessed the man, as he made no demand for money or anything else. He remembered that his face looked red and swollen and his hands felt hot as they clasped his throat, but he came to no conclusion about it and made haste to get home, and to conceal his encounter, and keep it to himself, as his whereabouts at that hour were better unknown.

But after he had reached home, gone to his own room and to bed, he could not sleep. Those wild eyes were constantly before him and seemed to be pursuing him from every direction. And as he thought of the hands upon his throat, he was beset with terror. The more he thought of them, the more the horror of it grew on him. He had no sleep all night; all the next day the eyes followed him, and the next, and the next, for two whole weeks; at the end of which he was seized with a terrible illness in his office, and when the physician came he ordered him taken home and to the uppermost room in the house, and completely isolated, directing that everything not absolutely necessary be

removed from the room. Margaret had been away from home three weeks. The physician insisted that she should not be sent for.

The third day he knew what he had already suspected; that it was a virulent case of smallpox. When he told Brice, the horrible eyes and bloated face of the man who assailed him appeared before him again, and he related his experience of the terrible encounter. Upon inquiry being made, it was found that a man who presented an unusual appearance had been seen wandering around for a day or two near where Brice met him and it was thought that some man who was suffering from that disease had wandered away in his delirium; no one had been near enough to speak to him, and he was set down for a tramp and nothing thought of it. Subsequently, the body of a man was found in an unfrequented part of the woods, and it was supposed that the unknown had died there alone.

Nurses were procured for Brice, and everything was done for his comfort, but the second week he grew worse and so violently insane that it was all the attendants could do to hold him or keep him in the room, as his one desire was to escape. He had not been willing Margaret should be sent for, but he called for her constantly, reproaching himself for his neglect of her, and living over his life with others, until his two listeners were horrified. His paroxysms were terrible, and his looks were loathsome in the extreme. He saw frightful shapes pursuing him, and his shrieks, as they seemed to him to catch and choke him, were appalling. Even the strong nerves of the nurses were shaken and

tried to the utmost. He had to be bound to the bed, and he writhed and tore everything he could reach.

One morning an unusually violent paroxysm seized him and he burst his bonds, and sprang at the throat of one of the attendants who would soon have breathed his last, but for timely assistance from his associate.

The violence of the patient's effort was too much for the overcharged brain, and the blood gushed from his mouth and nose and he dropped to the floor, dead,—a fit ending for so putrid a life.

The nature of Brice's disease had been kept a profound secret for obvious reasons. He was buried at night by the men who took care of him. The physician gave some reasonable explanation. The house was thoroughly disinfected, and after a time Mrs. Brice came home, but she never went to the house again.

CHAPTER XXI.

Rena and Tom Married.—Happiness.—Margaret at the Langleys'.—Andrew Married.—Margaret Settled in New York.—Gordon Returned.—Tells Margaret of His Love.—His Adventures.—A Drive.—Occultism.

RENA and Tom were happily married, and at the earnest solicitations of the Stanleys they went to live with them. They mourned deeply for Corinne, but they all adored Rena. She was so helpful and kind, so unselfish and sweet-tempered, and above all, so self-reliant. Corinne had been so different, they could not understand how so young a person could be what Rena was.

She was entirely happy there, merry, full of good cheer, always ready with funny sayings and jokes, so that it quite metamorphosed the family and made her "queen of all she surveyed." They all bowed down to her and worshipped, and Herbert often said if Tom had not married her, he should, for she belonged to the family.

Mr. Langley sent for Margaret as soon as they learned of the death of her husband, in order to take her away from all reminders of so much sadness, for when Brice's business affairs were settled, his whole career was laid bare and the town was filled with the scandal. Margaret, therefore, gladly accepted the in-

vation and turned her attention to forgetting as much as possible the four unhappy years just past, but her retrospections showed what her dull misery had blinded her to,—the agonies she had suffered.

After remaining some months at the Langleys', they reluctantly yielded her to her aunt, with whom she took up her abode. Her uncle said, "Now you have no excuse; you can stay with us as well as anywhere; it is not best for you to go back to Bington." Andrew had married Miss Burns and they could console and care for the father and mother.

Margaret had been some time in New York and was beginning to go a little into society and to feel like her former self and was able in a measure to forget the unhappy past.

One morning a caller was announced who failed to send up his card, but gave his name to the servant so imperfectly he was not understood. Margaret went to the reception-room expecting to see some business person, and met the outstretched arms of Mr. Gordon. From his face she would not have known him. He was so bronzed and bearded and gray; he showed signs of much suffering and his youth had fled.

Margaret was so surprised that her face blanched as white as snow. She reeled and would have fallen had he not caught her and led her to a seat.

"Am I so frightful as that?" said he, laughing. "I knew I was much changed, but I did not think my friends would lose consciousness over it, else I would have sent my photograph before me. Am I so frightful?"

"Oh, no indeed," said Margaret, "but it was so unexpected and I think I am changed, too, and am more sensitive to surprises than I used to be."

"Yes, I suppose so. Five years give time for changes. We have both had experience in that time."

"That is very true, but do tell me something about yourself, where you have been, and what you have seen in this long time."

"I have been in Africa and India mostly. Incidentally in my journeyings I have touched other countries. I have killed lions, cobras, and other fierce and wild animals and passed safely enough through many dangers and could not get killed and did not get hurt. This was in the first two years of my absence. After that I went to India and studied Occultism, about which I have much to tell you, if you will graciously extend to me the privilege. And now for yourself? I already know you have been married and lost your husband."

"My life has been humdrum enough," said Margaret, "with no adventure and little change, just an ordinary, tame, woman's life, the exact opposite of yours. You have had freedom, adventure and change; I have been shut up with sameness and monotony. I have really nothing to tell, but I shall most gladly give you opportunity to relate to me your interesting experiences. It is next best to having adventure yourself to hear it related by some one who has had it. You will remain at home now?"

"That depends entirely upon one person. Many months ago I was in a retreat of the 'Brotherhood'

in the Himalayas sitting peacefully under a tree within the walls when I heard a distant voice say, 'Go home at once. Your time has come.'

"I knew there was but one time for me. I immediately packed the few things I had, bade the Brothers adieu and started for home. I arrived the day before yesterday, made some inquiries regarding my friends, tried to get myself a little into civilized trim, and have come to you this morning to tell you that my future fate is in your hands.

"I loved you madly before I went away, notwithstanding my unmanly conduct. From the first moment my eyes rested upon you, you have been the one woman in the world for me. I abused the inestimable privilege you bestowed upon me in giving me your society and friendship. I went to Bington to tell you so, and stayed three days in the town with you. I was frantic, almost insane, when I learned that you were engaged to the man you afterwards married."

Here followed a recital of his thrilling experience in the old New Hampshire village, and Margaret looked into his eyes and said, sadly, "No, I was not engaged. I had never once thought of the man I married in any other light than as my brother's book-keeper at that time."

Then Margaret poured out her story, eagerly, but sadly, and he, knowing occult lore, saw and understood it all. The constant suggestion, the steady magnetism of desire that had been brought to bear upon her unconscious mind, Brice's subsequent

history, and everything connected with his untimely death, was graphically rehearsed. Then raising her eyes fondly, she said, "What a painful misunderstanding; for really, I never had thought of anyone but you." With the joy of these words George Gordon gathered her to himself as bountiful nature gathers her storm-tossed and spent child, promising to protect and serve her always for her priceless love.

A week later found Mr. Gordon settled in his own house, all the paraphernalia of his four years abroad put away, and the New York millionaire in his rightful place again. And we see him on this delightful morning driving up to Mr. Stanley's door to take Margaret out for an airing; and as she came out in her widow's weeds, it was hard to realize that she was the same woman who drove over the same route they were about to take, five years ago that very day.

To say that she was less beautiful would not be true, but there were lines in her face and form that came from her sad life and never could be effaced. Her beauty was richer and rarer and riper, for she had earned for herself a strong, calm soul; a power had come to her through bitter experiences, through difficulties overcome, through conquering of weaknesses. She had unfolded into a firmer selfhood that nothing could wrest from her. She understood life and herself better than of old, but still she realized how much there was to learn and to conquer.

The fullness of Mr. Gordon's experience can hardly be described. The first three years exhausted his purely animal nature. All the anger, the vindictive-

ness, and malice in him came to the surface and burned itself out. The selfish cruelty in him was satiated in his pursuit and murder of the animals wilder and fiercer than himself. He had been at white heat, and the dross of his nature had burned away, leaving him purified and fitted for the calm studious life of the brotherhood. And when his soul had worked itself free, he was allowed to come home and begin life where he left off.

His fruition was complete. He now had all his experience, and Margaret besides. Who could have foreseen on that day five years ago what would come to pass in both their lives? And how strange, but however situated, each soul must pass through the experience peculiar to itself, burdened with all it can bear, in riches or poverty, among high or low, civilized or uncivilized, and the broader and deeper the nature, the stronger the trials, and the more there is to be overcome.

They were talking in this vein as they rode along the smooth roads of Central Park, bringing out first one and then another of these truths and finding themselves possessed of such a deep joy as compensated them for all they had suffered.

Mr. Gordon questioned Margaret of her mental sensations when Brice was in pursuit of her, for he said: "I have been studying this subject of hypnotism, and find it really appalling to think how we all live in such a mental network of influences from the minds of others. Not alone between members of families, or even lovers, but between people whose temperaments

are 'en rapport,' and who draw upon us, and influence us entirely without knowledge on either side."

"Do explain this subtle power to me," said Margaret. "I am sure what you say is true, for I have had the same conflicting feelings. For a long time I never gave a thought to him who was by law my husband, except as a not over-agreeable man whom my brother employed, and who was because of that, always ready to serve me in any way he could. As I look back to it now, I think he was always disagreeable to me, and it was especially so to accept assistance from him, although I did not realize it then.

"My thoughts were so full of you that I seemed lost to most things of every day life. I felt so far away, it was difficult for me to attend to my ordinary duties. I was like one in a dream."

"Well, my own Margaret, I know now what I did not at all realize then, that quite unconsciously I was holding you and drawing your soul to mine, and if I had known that you loved me instead of Brice, nothing he could have done would have had any effect on you, for the position of mutual love is impregnable. But I was a coward and most foolish. I supposed you loved him and had given me over to my own unbridled temper, so I voluntarily, but not willingly, relinquished you to him, while I loved you madly myself,—yes madly. You were the one strong desire of my life, as you were of his. I thought you cared nothing for me, and loved him. I did not wish to coerce you, even if I could have done so, but I did not then think I could; so I gave you up to him in a most weak and cowardly way, and

left you to your fate. If I had understood the law, and my duty to you, I should have stayed to protect you from one, whom I believed a most unprincipled man.

"I ought to have known that your fine nature would not have yielded to such a man except under the strongest mental coercion, and if you showed a leaning that way, it was all the more reason why I should protect you. No wonder you seemed in a dream! Many a woman of weaker character has gone insane with less reason. With his base mind drawing you one way, and my cowardly thoughts holding you another, no wonder that you suffered exquisite mental torture!

"But my darling, it is all over now. We have literally 'worked out our own salvation,' and I hope have a long life in which to live out our allotted happiness."

"But, George dear, do tell me more about this mental telepathy, or suggestion. What you say arouses so many questions in my mind. Is it always woman that is held in this way? Are men never so influenced?"

"Many a man is in an insane asylum for just this reason. Sometimes it comes from their own fickleness. Such a man 'flits from flower to flower' enlisting the affections of a number of women each of whom clings to him, believing he loves her alone, each holding him to herself, each dwelling with loving, possessing thoughts upon him. It is very easy to see what would be the effect to a sensitive man. The counter-currents of magnetism sent from the different minds, drawing him first one way, then the other, and all keeping a firm hold upon him, according to the nature of their

desire. Can you not see that the result must be distraction?

"Then many an innocent man is pursued by some designing woman for mercenary or other purposes, and she holds him in the same way you were held if her mind is positive enough to dominate his.

"Members of families are constantly suggesting thought to each other, making each other well, or ill, happy or miserable, as the case may be, and scores of little children are 'don't-ed' to death. From morning till night it is 'Don't do this,' or 'Don't do that,' 'Don't make a noise,' 'Don't soil your dress,' 'Don't go to the window, you will catch cold,' 'Don't eat this or drink that, it will make you sick,' 'Don't say that bad word,' and so on through the whole vocabulary. The child hears nothing but 'don't' until it is a grown man or woman. It is hampered and restricted in every way, and never has a chance to act its own natural self. I am speaking of the unnecessary 'don'ts'. Of course a child must be governed, but not nagged forever, as many, perhaps most, of them are."

"Do tell me one other thing, for since my own sad experience I have been led to observe other lives, and I find mine is far from being an isolated case. Why is it that when a man wrongs the woman he loves, or has loved, as soon as he has committed this wrong, he turns against the wife who is blameless and abuses her?"

"That is easily explained, dearest, when you know something of human nature. If a man wrongs another person, be it in matters of affection or in busi-

ness, or in any way, for his own aggrandizement, that little prodding thing we call conscience plunges its nettles into his mind and renders him most uncomfortable. Now, no one likes to bear the pangs of self-reproach that prick as viciously as the villainies of his own wrong doing; for conscience is only the sum of our experience and education; and so the man sets about his own justification. There is no way to do this except to pick flaws in the one injured, and it is easy enough to misconstrue, and still more easy (if one is desiring to find the other party imperfect) to send irritating thoughts that shall induce hasty words, which are angrily answered, and thus breed the discontent desired. This allays the prickings of conscience in so far as it puts the other party in fault and passes his irritation over to the other. This kept up soon gives the sinner an easy conscience, and he pursues his iniquity happily, throwing all the blame upon the injured and innocent."

"Yes, I see clearly now, and I believe that was exactly my case. I did not love the man I called husband, but that was not my fault. I told him I did not love him before I consented to be his wife, but I did not feel as I did afterward, and I did not know, either, of his evil doings. At last I did come to hate him most cordially. I felt defrauded somehow, and I never could tell why. I did not know what caused me to feel that way, but now I see it all, and how strange it is! It seems more like a fairy tale than the truth, but as soon as I hear it, I am sure it is true. It corresponds with what I know of life, but never could ex-

plain. I think good women must have a great influence in the world."

"Yes, men carry the balance of power on the worldly plane, and through them comes what makes life pleasant to us here; but woman's intuition and tendencies toward the spiritual draw men away from pure selfness towards the final perfect state."

"This explains what has always been a mystery to me, and what most women feel to be a great injustice. Why woman has had it laid upon her that *she* should be high and pure, while it is man's prerogative to pull her down from her high place by any arts and wiles in his power,—she, too, the weaker sex,—and what is worse, he assails her through the highest, holiest, and at the same time, the weakest part, which is her love nature, and with his greater physical powers which generate stronger magnetic force and gives greater power to his suggestion, his victim yields. Then there is a great hue and cry the world over, that she has fallen. She loses cast, is hooted out of society, and generally condemned by the very ones who plot her ruin.

"All races of men have set up a different standard of morals for women and they make no difference whether woman falls through compulsion or from a depraved nature; the purer she is the greater must be her suffering."

"Alas! Can it be true that the race must be spiritualized through the strife and sufferings of woman's soul?"

"But dearest, I am coming to think this must be

true; that through her constant efforts here to deserve her rightful place, through her constant failures and remorse, her drafts upon the power of Spirit to sustain her, must come the final redemption of the race.

“Yes, my love, woman is the magnet that draws to earth the spirit vibrations; were there no strong attractive power, no need, no intense desire, the universal power of Spirit would go elsewhere and be drawn away from us by a stronger power, or desire. Woman looks to God, and man looks to woman, forgetting that her life on this plane has its needs. Do you not see the true idea is, man always seeks the innermost of woman’s nature, he does not know why, he does not understand that it is this very spiritual part he is in search of? His great desire is to possess all that she is, and in his blindness he thinks it is the personal life he wants, but really, it is his soul seeking strength through hers. This mistake has been made by mankind through his ignorance of spiritual truth,—the Soul which everyone knows is, but no one can find. It is the soul hunger that we are all starving for, not physical enjoyments.

“Oh, if we could but understand! If we could see the object of life to be the education and development of the Soul, which is the child of the union of Spirit and Matter,—the self-consciousness,—and work to that end instead of blundering along as we do, what a different world it would be!

“We are learning, though. It is something to know it has been seen by even a few. Thought travels fast, and the seed from the planting of one idea is immense. Let us hope. God is with us.”

of public opinion for her sake, and she told him they must relinquish the idea.

He sympathized with her entirely, and could not blame her, but it involved so much, he did not see his way. He did not wish to subject her to the snubs of society; and, shall we tell what he would never confess? He secretly did not wish to leave the door open for her escape. She was so much to him, his life was bound up in hers; he knew he loved her alone and always should; but he had been a man like unto other men so long he feared himself. Men look upon life different from women; what to a woman is a very serious matter, is to a man only a passing pleasure, and he might forget himself. He knew her experience having opened her eyes, it had made her suspicious, and her intuitions were so keen he feared some trouble might arise that would arouse some suspicion in her mind, that with her promptness of action, and direction of purpose, might deprive him of her. But to his honor be it said, he berated himself for such selfishness, and determined to gratify her if it was possible. And he knew that while she loved him fondly and exclusively, she felt such an absolute terror when she contemplated her former life, she could not yield.

She had told him what agonies, terrible indeed, she had suffered, when her former husband grew so despicable and hateful to her, that there was no way of escape except through the publicity of the divorce court.

He could not ask it of her; and upon the whole, he thought her sense of freedom would fortify her

She regarded a truly monogamous marriage as the one desideratum of happiness; but with the double standard of morals for men and women, with her knowledge that at the present stage of the world's advancement, such a marriage was the exception rather than the rule, she believed that until men understood that their present standards and methods only took them farther and farther from the goal of their earthly existence, which is happiness, it was not safe for her, and she dare not commit herself again to live a lie before the world if she were put in a position that should make it seem necessary. How could she be sure the same troubles would not come up to her again that had come at first?

Then arrayed against this vein of things was all the worldly side; her friends, position in the world, the exclusion from society, and the experiences she knew would follow.

To brave public opinion as she knew she would have to in any marriage outside of the law, even if in a marriage under the law divorce should follow with no end of scandal, and all the evils attending it, she knew it would be considered by "Mrs. Grundy" preferable to a union of true hearts from which the possibility of all this publicity was eliminated.

The more she thought about it, the more decided she was that she could never take that step again. She must have a marriage in which love alone should be the bond, and from which she could quietly escape, if she found it desirable, or none at all.

She would not ask Mr. Gordon to make such sacrifice

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. Gordon Impatient.—Margaret Makes Difficulties.—Discussion of Ways and Means.—Wedding.—Travel.—Home.—Children.—Happiness and Harmony.

MR. GORDON was getting impatient to have Margaret to himself. He had lived alone much too long; his palatial mansion needed a mistress; he wished to introduce his peerless Margaret to society—to his dear five hundred friends; but most of all he wanted her companionship, her delightful presence.

A new, and to him unexpected, difficulty, however, arose, Margaret's old aversion to marriage asserting itself strongly again. How could she help distrusting man? Had she not had experience? Her married life had been bitter, indeed, death would be preferable to such another experience. What could she do? She loved Mr. Gordon and respected him more than any other man, more than herself, but what would be harmful to herself, would also be harmful for him. How could they be sure their experience had been sufficient to ensure them a safe and healthful life, for inharmony is not healthful or soul filling, and as through their former experience they had learned the object and aim of life, they could do no less than profit by what they had learned. How could she tie herself by any human law to conditions that would tend to destroy the good of what had already been learned?

patience, and she might really give him a better chance in case any trouble should arise. Yet he would do what he could to convince her.

At their next interview, he said, "My dear Margaret, are you sure you fully understand what it will mean to you to break away from the customs of society?"

"I have thought it over from every side, and am fully convinced that with a clear conscience, and a clear sense of my right to do what seems best for us, I can meet what comes. If our love is the true article, there is no need of other bond than we shall lay upon ourselves. If it is not, there is only sin and misery in the perpetuation of the relations belonging to it."

"Yes, it is all right for us, but the world will say we are transgressing the laws of good society. I know that the civil law has in some states sanctioned such a connubial life, but Society, my dear, Society!"

"I think I can bear it. My life belongs first to me, and then to society. I do not advocate anything for any one but myself and the man I love. Let others look to themselves. I have studied your temperament and my own and have used the best judgment I have. Let others do the same.

"I fully realize there are shadows ahead, but let us take the first right step, and the 'Red Sea' of our difficulties will be parted for our passage through."

"Margaret, you are a charming woman, and I love you fondly. I am surprised at the thought you have given the subject. I expect that is the way with you women; you do a "power o' thinking" in your quiet

way that no one suspects you of. We will find some way to carry out your ideas, but still, there is that bugbear, society, and its prejudices."

"I know it, I know it, and it is the hardest part by far. I should not mind for myself, but for you, I do. Your position in society, your family name, your own prejudices ought not to be laid aside for my sum of experiences. I fully realize this, but I cannot overcome my feelings on the subject and I do not know what is best to be done. I suppose we must live as we are."

"No, Margaret! a thousand times no! I will not listen to that for a moment; and yet I will not coerce you. Some way must be found. My name, family or prejudices, are as nothing to that. I will not have it so. Let me think of it till to-morrow, meanwhile I pray you, exercise your woman's ingenuity to devise a way. I presume to say you have already a plan that would make everything smooth."

"If I had, I should not think it right to propose it, because I, not you, demur to the present mode. It is your prerogative to devise the way."

"Well, if I must, I must, but do at least give me the benefit of your mental suggestion to which I am so susceptible. Really, I do not think you can help that, and that is all the hope I have of getting my befogged brain to work out a solution of our difficulty." And as he pressed his lips to hers, he felt that society or no society, nothing should ever separate them.

As the door closed behind him, Margaret threw herself on a couch, feeling as though her very life was

drawn from her, and was soon in a profound slumber. Her lover was drawing from her mind the details of the plan already perfected there.

Two days had passed before Mr. Gordon presented himself to Margaret. He found it very difficult to solve this problem. He had shut himself up in "The Silence" and sent to his far away brotherhood, his message for assistance. To find a happy medium between the opinions of those friends he did not wish to grieve, and Margaret's quite natural feelings, was not an easy task, and he resolved that not even by suggestion should she be disturbed; for so true and conscientious a nature as hers would not feel as positive as she did, unless there were some deeper reason than just her own life experiences, and he was sure she must be truly guided by the Spirit.

Many difficulties accompanied every plan for the marriage under these new conditions.

His first thought, and the one that appealed to him the strongest was, that after sitting in "The Silence" of their own thoughts and of the invisible hosts that surrounded them, they should with clasped hands, agree to live together and love each other as long as the spirit of harmony abode with them; and with no witness but the "Most High" and their own exalted thoughts pronounce themselves wedded. Then they would start for the Continental tour they had contemplated. This he saw would be the most agreeable way to themselves. Yet he also saw that through the known laws of Spiritual Science, that "As it is in the unseen, so it must be in the seen," if they desired

the attendance of their unseen friends they must provide some way for their expression on the plane of our physical vision. And he decided to invite their friends and prepare for a gorgeous wedding at which no expense should be spared. He wished to express the spiritual scene which was before him as well as he could. Then in his own house with his best friends about him, he would state to both assemblages their belief in their right to a free marriage, and promise to live together as long as there was love and harmony between them.

He laid his plan before Margaret who was delighted with it, because, she said, "My dear love, it is substantially the plan I had in mind."

Immediate preparations were made and hastened as much as possible. Margaret spared no expense in her trousseau, and everything was on the grandest scale. The house was remodeled and redecorated, and an additional corps of servants hired for the occasion. Everything art, culture and abundant means could do was done. Precious mementos of Mr. Gordon's travels abroad were produced, and the house was made a model of good taste, elegance and splendor.

Margaret's bridal robe was a gorgeous, white brocade, so heavy it would bear its own weight, with flowers embroidered upon it in gold thread and precious stones. Her jewels were most rare, and sent by an Eastern Prince; her veil was a filmy web of old lace, that had been in the Gordon family for generations. Under a canopy of silks and gold, with a profusion of ferns and flowers, stood the peerless Margaret and her noble

lover. Soft music was heard in the distance, and the murmur of voices was hushed as Mr. Gordon spoke.

“Dear friends: My beloved Margaret and myself, learning from experience in our own lives, and from observation of the lives of others, and from the Living Spirit within us and that pervades all, that Love is a thing Divine, and individual love of consequence only to the individuals who possess it, and believing that love will not be fettered or held in bondage, but must be left to its own sweet Will, we now announce to you our intention of living together in closest companionship, with no bond uniting or binding us, except this Divine bond of Love, which shall sustain us as we hope, during the rest of our natural lives. But if through the vicissitudes of our earthly career, we change in our feeling toward each other, we claim the right to separate, and to do with our lives whatever seems right and best for us, without interference by any but the Great Spirit who directs us.” With a hand clasp and a sacred kiss he greeted Margaret and stepped out among their friends, who, breathless with amazement at such new departure, now crowded around them offering congratulations and comments. No hint had escaped to apprise the guests of what was to take place.

We must leave the reader to imagine what followed, as things went on in much the same order as is usual at weddings, and the chatterings and gossip were delayed until after the festivities were over. But the reader can well imagine that the affair furnished food for excitement in the blasé circles of the “five hundred” and furnished also many an item for the greedy news-

papers, and went on its errand around the world. All unusual occurrences must take that trip whether the actors will or no.

What came of it? Mr. Gordon and his best beloved friend sailed the next day upon an extended European tour and left the matter to be tossed to and fro from mind to mind until it was worn out. After a year abroad, the couple returned to their home, harmonious and happy.

Two children have been added to their household, and their love has broadened and grows more and more restful and delicious as time passes on, to them all. The word Home means harmony and happiness, and as I think of them now with the memory of their beautiful lives freshened by the writing of these pages, I recall these lines of Helen Clarissa Von Ranklar:

“Two souls in sweet accord

Each for each caring and each self unheard,
Bringing life's discords into perfect tune,
Free to their feelings and to nature living,
Plighting in faith nor needing proof nor proving,
Taking for granted, never asking, giving,
Not doubting and not fearing how, or where,
Not caring if less bright or fair;
Sure to be ever loved and ever sure of loving.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mrs. Benton and Flora.—Mrs. Benton Ill.—Herbert Comes.—Mrs. Benton Falls Asleep.—Murmurs Her Love.—Awakes in Convulsions.—Death.—Flora Goes to the Langleys'.—Herbert Proposes.—Family Blessing.—Tom and Rena in Their Home.—Herbert and Flora Married.—Tom and Rena Find the Cave with Little Corinne.

TIME has not stayed its course with Mr. Langley. His home has been very happy. Rena and Tom are still living with them, but are beginning to talk of a home of their own. The luckless lady whom Herbert saved from her villainous captors, was provided with a lucrative situation, and proved herself to be a person of refinement and culture, as well as of a gentle and lovable nature.

Not long since, her father had died, before which, he repented of his harshness and left his property to his wife and daughter, jointly. Mrs. Benton and her lovely daughter, who had grown into young womanhood, went home to live with her mother, making frequent visits to the Langleys' in response to a mutual attachment that would not be broken.

After a few months, Mrs. Benton's mother followed her father into the Hereafter, and she and Flora were left alone.

The trials of her early life had so worn upon Mrs.

Benton, that now they were left to themselves, and Flora's education was finished, she fell into a decline. She could hardly be said to be ill, but she was languid, and shunned exercise, quite contrary to her usual custom. She kept her bed late in the morning, and had little appetite, and as she laughingly said, took on the airs of an invalid. Flora finally became anxious, as she grew worse rather than better, and wrote to her friends, the Langleys, her anxiety for her mother, asking that some of them come to see what they thought of her condition, and if anything could be done for her, as she, herself was so inexperienced, and her mother made light of the situation and would not call a physician.

Herbert seemed to be the only one that could leave home just at that time and in his peregrinations among the poor, he had come to be quite skilled in sickness, quite a doctor in fact, and he answered Flora's summons.

Mrs. Benton and Flora were delighted to see him and made much of him. He remained with them several days studying the invalid, and doing his best to amuse and entertain her. She was well enough to drive and go sailing, or do almost anything that did not require exertion, and they enjoyed themselves very much.

Herbert was surprised to note the improvement in Flora, who had always been "little Flora" to him; for none of the family had realized that she was so near womanhood; they loved and petted her as a child, and did not wish it otherwise. Herbert had not seen her for a year as she had been away at school, and since

her graduation, had been confined to her grandmother and mother.

The changes through which she had passed, and her anxiety for her mother who was all she had in the world, had matured her, and she had taken on a womanliness that was pleasant to see. She was very charming, as Herbert fully realized.

Mrs. Benton seemed very happy the first few days of Herbert's visit, and much better. She watched him closely and seemed to be studying him; but after a little she drooped again, and aroused anew all their anxious fears.

On the fifth day of his visit she was suddenly attacked with spasms, and the hastily summoned physician confided to Herbert that there was serious trouble of the heart from which she would hardly recover; yet, under careful management she might live for some time. He, however, remained through the night and her condition in the morning not being favorable, a nurse was sent for, and two very anxious days were spent in the most watchful care.

On the morning of the third day she desired Flora and the nurse to take some rest, and Herbert sat with her. He was close beside her when she seemed to fall asleep. He was holding her hand in hopes to impart some of his own strength to her. After a while she began to murmur to herself in snatches, and he stooped to catch what she was saying.—“Oh Herbert! light of my life!—You do not see—that my heart is breaking—for you—O! the years—I—have—loved—you! Since the night—you saved me—from those dreadful men—

Alas! you did not see—my devotion! you did not know—I was dying for—you!—I could not—live for you!—You did not—need me—! I have loved you—in silence—dear—It made me very—happy!—but I could not always—bear it—I shall have to—die! I had rather die!—but Flora!!—what will—become—of her—!—all alone. —Oh God—take care—of her—” And soon she awoke with another sudden start and went into a spasm that lasted hours. At last she was quiet and conscious. She motioned Herbert to come nearer, and between struggles for breath asked him to look after Flora. “She has no friend.” He assured her with all tenderness that he would. She faintly pressed his hand, closed her eyes, and with one convulsive shudder, ceased to breathe.

To Flora who knew so little about sickness, the sudden death was terrible. She was totally unprepared, and clung frantically to her mother’s form and would not be comforted. At last Herbert gently, but firmly, lifted her in his arms and bore her away.

A telegram soon brought Rena and Mrs. Stanley, and to them the young man gave the stricken girl, and as soon as possible went away by himself to think over the sad revelation that had been made to him.

He saw how natural it was that Mrs. Benton should have loved one who had saved her from a dreadful fate, and the effect his own illness for her sake, as she thought, must have had on her, and he thought tenderly of the woman who had given her life for love of him. The knowledge came too late for him to make her any

amends; he could only faithfully fulfill his promise to care for Flora.

The funeral of Mrs. Benton being over, they insisted upon taking Flora home with them, for to leave her alone was not to be thought of. She seemed a legacy to them and they would not part with her.

As time passed, her grief was somewhat assuaged, and life again began to take on color for her. Nothing was left undone to console her in her loneliness and Herbert was especially devoted to her.

For the first time in his life his attention was attracted to a woman. He had been so engrossed in business and philanthropy, he had not thought of love for himself; but with the feeling of sadness at Mrs. Benton's fate, came the thought of what might have been if he had not been so much occupied in other lines. She was a very lovable woman, and he felt sure now could have made him happy if he had only known. He brooded over it much, and as Tom and Rena felt they must live by themselves for obvious reasons, he determined if Flora could love him, to ask her to be his wife.

The auspicious day came at last when he laid his noble and manly love at her feet. It was a great surprise to Flora, but as she afterwards told him, she could not remember the time when she had not loved him. Her surprise was soon turned to joy, and with his arm encircling her waist, he led her exultantly for the family blessing.

Great was the joy of all for they already loved her, and although Rena's place in the family could not be

filled, it would be delightful to have the young life in the house permanently. There was in due time another wedding and great rejoicing, and Herbert's love now that he was awakened was overwhelming; and Flora reaped what her mother had sown.

Tom had built a house not far from the Langleys, and he and Rena were installed as housekeepers before Herbert's marriage. They were proud and happy in their new home, and in due time the melodious voice of a young stranger echoed within its walls, and Tom's joy was complete.

Mother and babe throve, and Rena with the honors and cares of motherhood upon her, was dearer to him than ever before. And at last when Rena finally learned the secret of the "Lovers' Cave" in the mountains, Tom was with her, and he carried on his shoulder the crowing little girl Corinne, with her chubby hands tightly clenched in his hair, and her lively feet beating a tattoo to the music of their laughter.







WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville, Pa.
Sept—Oct 1985
We're Quality Bound

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00022262713